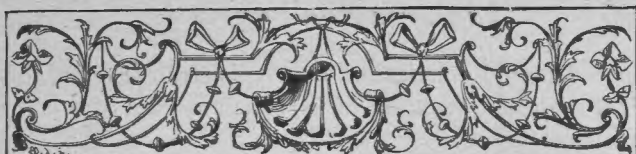


PART III.

THE BREAKING OF THE CHAIN.



CHAPTER XV.

ISRAEL'S NEW MOSES.

THE total Jewish population of the world, at the present time, according to the latest estimates,* is 6,300,000, distributed as follows: To Europe 5,400,000, to Asia 300,000, to Africa 350,000, to America 250,000, to Oceanica 12,000. Of the different countries of Europe, Russia has a Hebrew population of 2,552,000; Austria with Hungary, 1,644,000; Germany, 562,000; France, 63,000; and Great Britain, 60,000. Of the portion assigned to America, the United States contains 230,000.

It appears from these figures that there are no lands in which the Jews form a large element of the population; but for some reason an astonishing change from their old abasement is to be noticed in the position they have come to occupy. The mediæval outcast is everywhere climbing into places of power, until it begins to seem possible that he may attain in the future an ascendancy as remarkable as his past abjectness. Cries, sometimes of admiration, but more often of dislike and alarm, are uttered over this fact in all parts of the civilized world,—all, however, whether laudatory or ill-natured, giving evidence of

* Reinach: "Histoire des Israélites," 1885.

a deep-seated conviction, that this strange tribe, forever with us but never of us, is at any rate of quality most masterful.

Let us survey for a moment the various departments of human energy, and obtain some comprehensive idea of what the Hebrew is accomplishing.

In military life, we find that although in antiquity Israel fought many a stern fight under valiant champions, it can claim since the dispersion no great note in war. Jews have fought, however, in the ranks of various armies, and have furnished good generals to various standards and causes. The most distinguished soldier of Hebrew descent that can be mentioned is probably Marshal Massena, whose real name is said to have been Manasseh,—the warrior whom Napoleon called “the favorite child of victory,” one of the most scientific as well as one of the most brave and tenacious of the great chieftains whom the fateful Corsican summoned to fight at his side.

Turning to the employments of peace, the record of Hebrew achievements in agriculture and the handicrafts will also be a short one. We have seen that there have been times when the Jew has figured as farmer and mechanic; it is not so at present, and the fact that he so seldom works with his hands, really earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, is often made the basis of a harsh judgment against him. But really do we not find here an evidence of Israelitish power? We should all prefer, if we could, to get on by our wits, rather than by labor of the hands; hence the crowding up everywhere into trade and the professions, away from the soil and the tool.

We feel that the tendency ought to be discouraged; and in the case of the Jew, we should like him better, if now and then he put to the wheel of life actual muscle, instead of, forever, that subtle power of his brain. (But when a whole race undertakes to live by its wits, and succeeds so remarkably, what ability it must possess!)

It is indeed a brilliant success. In the world of trade, it has in some way come about that a pre-eminence is everywhere conceded to the Jew. He is omnipresent and everywhere dreaded. It is of competition with him that the pedlar who deals in sixpence-worths stands most in fear; the same aggressive elbows are crowding cavalierly the millionaire in the transactions of *la haute finance*. Keen indeed must the man be who can match him in the high or low places; and as for Gentile accusations of meanness and knavery, shall the pot call the kettle black? There are exchanges in great cities of the world practically abandoned to all but Jews. In our new Western and Southern towns, there are sometimes scarce any but Hebrew signs on the business streets. In trade, the Hebrew is ubiquitous and always at the front.

Turning to the fine arts, the Hebrews have rarely become famed as painters and sculptors, a result to which perhaps the ancient Semitic repugnance to the representation of the forms of living creatures has helped. In music, however, their glory is of the highest. Mendelssohn, Halévy, Moscheles, Meyerbeer, Rubinstein, Joachim, as composers and performers, are among the greatest. Wagner, indeed,

wrote a diatribe against Jewish influence in music, and there is a story that he prepared a composition especially to vindicate against the Hebrews the superiority of a pure Teutonic taste; but when it came to the performance, lo, the patriotic master beheld the first violins all in the hands of the aliens, whose dark eyes were scanning serenely the tangled score that was to bring them to confusion! The fact was that none but Jews could be found skilful enough to take the burden of the performance. As actors, the Israelites have also been very illustrious. With Rachel and Bernhardt at the summit, it would be easy to mention a long and most distinguished list.

If we follow graver paths we encounter, among philosophers, the great Spinoza, at whose work we have just glanced, and we shall presently consider still another most illustrious name. Franke is great in medicine, Bernays, of Bonn, is noted for erudition in Greek, Benfey the first of Sanscrit scholars, Auerbach at the head of German novelists, Heine the chief of German poets since the death of Goethe,—all men of the ancient Israelitish strain, though in the case of some of them the ancient faith was forsaken. When we look at the field of statesmanship, as we shall presently do, what men of Jewish blood have done is as astonishing as their achievements elsewhere.

How is it that the wonderful transformation has been brought about? We have seen the poor Hebrew under the heel—a hundred nations trying to stamp the life out of him as if he were a venomous reptile. He makes the claim at the present

hour that he has conquered the world,* and many are ready, with fear and dread, to concede it. Let us study certain great figures in various departments of effort, men whose genius and energy are thoroughly Jewish, so that they can well be regarded as types. In reviewing these careers, the change will soon become explicable.

As we enter the eighteenth century, though the harshness of men has become somewhat modified, the chain that binds the Jew, nevertheless, throughout the civilized world is firmly fastened. The massacres and fierce bodily tortures are indeed for the most part things of the past, except perhaps in Spain, or in outlying regions where barbarism yields slowly. In many a city, however, the Jew's presence in the streets is scarcely suffered, and with every night he is barred pitilessly into the dirt and discomfort of Ghetto and Juden-gasse. Germany was especially narrow and cruel toward the Israelites. In many towns they could not live upon the street corners; in others only a certain small number could be married in the course of a year. In Berlin, the Hebrews, to whom, through their creed, swine's flesh was accursed, were forced to buy the wild boars slain in the king's hunts. Thus exposed to insult and hardship, the Jews of Germany, the "Askenazim," as they were called, were sunk among their co-religionists into an especial degradation; progress was stopped, and wide views became lost. They had a language of their own, a jargon of Hebrew and Ger-

* Beaconsfield's assertion : see p. 2.

man. Their religion became corrupted through superstitions; their rabbis came largely from among the Polish Jews, who were usually ignorant and debased. Under these teachers efforts to become enlightened were repressed; to speak German correctly, or to read a German book, was heresy. The handicrafts were forbidden them,—to a large extent even trade; the professions were of course closed avenues; to sell old clothes, to wander about as pedlars, and to lend money at interest were almost the only occupations that remained.

From the midst of the German Jews, however, sprang at this time a man, who, if of less wonderful intellect than Spinoza, was yet of spirit most keen and enlightened. In magnanimity and broad charity he was not surpassed by the great outcast of Holland. In the story which we are following his figure has even a greater significance than that of Spinoza, from the fact that though persecuted he remained among his people, beneficently setting in motion reforms which have been felt by Jews in every land, and which in times following those in which we live, will bring about for Jews a happy future. As has been urged, the intolerance with which the Hebrew has been treated must not be ascribed solely to Christian narrowness. The persecutor has been provoked to clench his fist by the stern pride with which the victim has asserted his superiority and held himself aloof. Such modifications of prejudice in the oppressor as can be now seen, would be much less marked than they are had not a more conciliatory spirit begun to manifest itself in the oppressed.



In the year 1729, in the town of Dessau, was born the benign and far-seeing genius, Moses the son of Mendel, who, like Moses of old, the son of Amram, was to lead Israel to better things.

Moses Mendelssohn was a precocious child, devouring with passionate appetite the rabbinical husks upon which alone his mind was permitted to feed, until at length his premature labor brought upon him curvature of the spine, from which he never recovered. As a boy of thirteen he followed to Berlin the rabbi who had been his teacher, his parents disapproving his course and withdrawing their support. The little humpback faced starvation with unshrinking persistence while he followed his bent, until, after much suffering, he won over friends who could help him. As the youth approached manhood he broadened his acquirements, adding almost by stealth German, Latin, mathematics, French, and English to his Talmudic lore, soon beginning also to seize upon the thoughts of the great philosophers. As his culture widened his old friends became cold; as in Spinoza's case his former teachers feared his heresies, and soon began to frown and threaten.

When he had reached twenty-one, however, a rich silk-manufacturer of Berlin became his patron, made him the tutor of his children, also his business assistant, and at last his partner; henceforth, then, Mendelssohn was free to follow his own path, unannoyed by the wolf of hunger, and, later, even in affluence. The young man became a member of a circle of brilliant minds, among whom ruled as chief one of

the mightiest gods of the German Olympus, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and henceforth, to the day of Lessing's death, Mendelssohn was held in the heart of hearts of that courageous striver. The slender silk-merchant, while with Hebrew thrift he managed to seize upon gold in the ways of commerce, possessed at the same time strength for the sublimest flights. He early became known as an able writer for the literary periodicals, and at length found himself growing famous. One day the frank and hearty Lessing came with a laugh to Mendelssohn's desk in he counting-room, holding in his hand a volume fresh from printer and binder. To the amazement of Mendelssohn, it was a manuscript of his own, which he had modestly withheld from the press; his friend, however, had taken it without his knowledge, and was spreading it far and wide in an ample edition. Its success was so marked that he was henceforth a maker of books. In literature he was fruitful and always beneficent, doing much toward the spread in Germany of an elegant culture and taste, in the years immediately preceding the glorious sun-burst, when with Goethe and Schiller the great day of German letters begins.

At first known as a writer upon æsthetic subjects, the excellence of his thoughts was scarcely more remarkable than the beauty of his style; but at length in his forty-second year came the book which has given him a note of a far grander kind, and placed his name among the chief helpers of his age and country. This was his "*Phædo*," a work upon the immortality of the soul. In this book Mendelssohn

translated the dialogue of Plato, of the same name, but enlarged and developed the consideration in the spirit of the later philosophy. As an introduction to the work, a picture of the life and character of Socrates was given, full of the highest love and veneration for the master-sage. The tone of the "Phædo" of Mendelssohn is most exalted, and soon excited in the world general admiration. Edition followed edition; it was translated into most European languages. Inasmuch as so many German thinkers have hidden their speculations within a thorny and forbidding entanglement which renders them quite inaccessible except to minds of exceptional power of penetration, it is worth while to speak of the admirable clearness and beauty of Mendelssohn's method of presentment. The work is a series of the sublimest thoughts, fitly framed, pervaded with the broadest and noblest spirit.*

Like Maimonides, the grand Hebrew of the thirteenth century,—like Spinoza,—in the spirit, too, of that higher and holier soul that came forth from Zion, the supernal Christ,—Mendelssohn, looked and worked toward the broadest tolerance and human brotherhood. In the truest spirit of charity he labored with his people, trying to raise them from their ignorance, and to smooth away from the Jewish countenance the arrogant frown and lifting of the eyelid with which through the ages they have stubbornly faced the Gentile. Of one of his books written for his co-religionists, called "Jerusalem," Immanuel Kant wrote in such terms as these: "With

* Kurz: "Geschichte der deutschen Literatur."

what admiration I have read your 'Jerusalem'! I regard this book as the announcement of a great though slow-coming reform, which will affect not only your nation, but also others. You have managed to unite with your religion such a spirit of freedom and tolerance as it has not had credit for, and such as no other faith can boast. You have so powerfully presented the necessity of an unlimited freedom of conscience for every faith, that at length on our side, too, the church must think about it. The Christians must study whether in their creeds there are not things which burden and oppress the spirit, and look toward a union which, as regards essential religious points, shall bring together all."

As Judaism spurned forth its nobler spirits in the earlier time, so the effort was made to put under ban this later liberalizing genius. He, however, though looked at askance by all the stricter members of the synagogue, who to this day have not ceased to oppose the fruitful influence that proceeded from him, clung tenaciously until his death to his Jewish birthright. One finds something most pathetic in the story of a certain grave embarrassment into which he was thrown by an over-zealous Christian friend. Lavater, the Swiss clergyman, well known in the world for his writings upon physiognomy, was a most earnest upholder of the faith. Having translated from the French a work upon the Christian evidences which he felt to be unanswerable, he dedicated it to Mendelssohn, summoning him, as he did so, either to show that the positions of the work were groundless, or to renounce the Jewish creed.

Circumstances forced Mendelssohn to take some notice of the challenge. To renounce Judaism of course he was not ready, believing, as he did, that it was capable of expansion into a faith most beneficent. On the other hand, he was scarcely more ready to controvert Christianity; for he hated strife, felt no desire to proselyte, and hoped for some reconciliation of the jarring creeds by other than polemic means. In his trouble he wrote and published a letter to Lavater, in which was unfolded all the beauty of his soul, and which gained for him the approval of all intelligent men. Without transgressing moderation, he convinced all fair-minded readers, overcoming even the proselyter himself.

A passage from this famous letter of Mendelssohn will be interesting*:

"For all I cared Judaism might have been hurled down in every polemical compendium, and triumphantly sneered at in every academic exercise, and I would not have entered into a dispute about it. Rabbinical scholars and rabbinical smatterers might have grubbed in obsolete scribblings, which no sensible Jew reads or knows of, and have amused the public with the most fantastic ideas of Judaism, without so much as a contradiction on my part. It is by virtue that I wish to shame the opprobrious opinion commonly entertained of a Jew, and not by controversial writings.

"Pursuant to the principles of my religion, I am not to seek to convert any one who is not born according to our laws. This proneness to conversion, the

* From "Memoirs of M. Mendelssohn," by M. Samuels, p. 54, etc.

origin of which some would fain tack on the Jewish religion, is, nevertheless, diametrically opposed to it. Our rabbis unanimously teach that the written and oral laws which form conjointly our revealed religion, are obligatory on our nation only. 'Moses commanded us a Law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.' We believe that all other nations of the earth have been directed by God to adhere to the laws of nature. Those who regulate their conduct according to this religion of nature and of reason, are called *virtuous men of other nations*, and are the children of eternal salvation.

"Our rabbis are so remote from desiring to make proselytes, that they enjoin us to dissuade by forcible remonstrances, every one who comes forward to be converted. We are to lead him to reflect that by such a step he is subjecting himself needlessly to a most onerous burden; that in his present condition he has only to observe the precepts of nature and reason, to be saved; but the moment he embraces the religion of the Israelites, he subscribes gratuitously to all the rigid rules of that faith, to which he must then strictly conform, or await the punishment which the legislator has denounced on their infraction. Finally, we are to hold up to him a faithful picture of the misery, tribulation, and obloquy in which our nation is now living, in order to guard him from a rash act which he might ultimately repent.

"Thus you see the religion of my fathers *does not wish* to be extended. We are not to send abroad missions. Whoever is not born conformable to our

laws has no occasion to live according to them. We alone consider ourselves bound to acknowledge their authority; and this can give no offence to our neighbors. Suppose there were amongst my neighbors a Confucius or a Solon. I could, consistently with my religious principles, love and admire the great man; but I should never hit on the extravagant idea of converting a Confucius or a Solon. What should I convert him for? As he does not belong to the *Congregation of Jacob*, my religious laws were not legislated for him; and on *doctrines* we should soon come to an understanding. 'Do I think there is a chance of his being saved?' *I* certainly believe that he who leads mankind on to virtue in this world cannot be damned in the next.

"I am so fortunate as to count among my friends many a worthy man who is not of my faith. We love each other sincerely, notwithstanding we presume, or take for granted, that in matters of belief we differ widely in opinion. I enjoy the delight of their society, which both improves and solaces me. Never has my heart whispered: 'Alas, for this excellent man's soul!' He who believes that no salvation is to be found out of the pale of his own church must often feel such sighs rise in his bosom."

The candid Lavater wrote Mendelssohn a public letter, acknowledging that he had been thoughtless and indelicate, and begging his pardon. This trial, however, and another, in which he was obliged to defend the fame of Lessing, as he thought, unjustly aspersed, proved, for his sensitive nature, too severe a strain. He fell ill, and at length, in 1786, came death.

Moses Mendelssohn was undersized and always badly deformed. A habit of stammering, also, made conversation difficult. He possessed, however, a personal charm, which overcame all impediments. Lavater, who so disquieted him, was an enthusiastic friend, and has left a description of his face, which, as coming from the famous physiognomist, has great interest. "I rejoice to see these outlines. My glance descends from the noble curve of the forehead to the prominent bones of the eye. In the depth of this eye resides a Socratic soul. The decided shape of the nose, the magnificent transition from the nose to the upper lip, the prominence of both lips, neither projecting beyond the other,—oh! how all this harmonizes and makes sensible and visible the divine truth of physiognomy!"

A pleasant story is told by Auerbach of the wooing of Moses Mendelssohn.

"He was at the baths of Pyrmont where he became acquainted with Gugenheim, a merchant of Hamburg. 'Rabbi Moses,' said Gugenheim one day, 'we all admire you, but my daughter most of all. It would be the greatest happiness to me to have you for a son-in-law. Come and see us in Hamburg.'"

Mendelssohn was very shy in consequence of his deformity, but at last he resolved upon the journey. He arrived in Hamburg and called upon Gugenheim at his office. The latter said: "Go up-stairs and see my daughter; she will be pleased to see you, I have told her so much about you."

He saw the daughter, and the next day came to

see Gugenheim, and presently asked him what his daughter, who was a very charming girl, had said of him.

"Ah, most honored rabbi," said Gugenheim, "shall I candidly tell you?"

"Of course."

"Well, as you are a philosopher, a wise and great man, you will not be angry with the girl. She said she was frightened on seeing you, because you——"

"Because I have a hump?"

Gugenheim nodded.

"I thought so; but I will still go and take leave of your daughter."

He went up-stairs and sat down by the young lady, who was sewing. They conversed in the most friendly manner, but the girl never raised her eyes from her work, and avoided looking at him. At last, when he had cleverly turned the conversation in that direction, she asked him:

"Do you believe that marriages are made in heaven?"

"Yes, indeed," said he; "and something especially wonderful happened to me. At the birth of a child, proclamation is made in heaven: He or she shall marry such or such a one. When I was born, my future wife was also named, but at the same time it was said: 'Alas! she will have a dreadful hump-back.' 'O God,' I said then, 'a deformed girl will become embittered and unhappy, whereas she should be beautiful. Dear Lord, give me the hump-back, and let the maiden be well formed and agreeable.'"

Scarcely had Moses Mendelssohn finished speak-

ing when the girl threw herself upon his neck: she afterwards became his wife; they lived happily together, and had good and handsome children."

Pleasant pictures of the life of Mendelssohn with his wife and children have been drawn. But the shadow of their origin was always about them. "I sometimes go out in the evening," he once wrote, "with my wife and children. 'Papa,' inquires one of them, in innocent simplicity, 'what is it that those lads call out after us? Why do they throw stones at us? What have we done to them?' 'Yes, dear papa,' says another, 'they always run after us in the streets and shout, "Jew-boy! Jew-boy." Is it a disgrace in the eyes of the people to be a Jew? What is that to them?' I cast down my eyes and sigh to myself: 'Poor humanity? To what point have things come!'"

The data for this sketch have been derived from Mendelssohn's great-grandson, Sebastian Hensel, from the literary historian Kurz, and other biographers. We have also a beautiful and graphic portrait, drawn by the man who perhaps possessed as sharp powers of discrimination as any mind which the world has known. Mendelssohn, as we have seen, early became the friend of Lessing, and it was under the influence of that benign atmosphere that the latter created his "Nathan the Wise," in the conception of the Syrian Jew, establishing a memorial of the reforming genius which the world will never forget.

When Lessing * selected a Jew to be the hero of

* See the writer's "Short History of German Literature."

his grandest play, the innovation was so unheard of as to mark his courage more strikingly perhaps than any act he ever performed—and he was the most intrepid of men. “Nathan the Wise” was written late in life, when Lessing’s philosophy had ripened, and when his spirit, sorely tried in every way, had gained from sad experience only sweeter humanity. Judged by rules of art, it is easy to find fault with it, but one is impatient at any attempt to measure it by such a trivial standard. It is thrilled from first to last by a glowing God-sent fire—such as has appeared rarely in the literature of the world. It teaches love to God and man, tolerance, the beauty of peace.

In Nathan, a Jew who has suffered at the hands of the Crusaders the extremest affliction—the loss of his wife and seven children—is not embittered by the experience. He, with the two other leading figures, Saladin and the Templar, are bound together in a close intimacy. They are all examples of nobleness, though individualized. In Nathan, severe chastening has brought to pass the finest gentleness and love. Saladin is the perfect type of chivalry, though impetuous and over-lavish, through the possession of great power. The Templar is full of the vehemence of youth. So they stand, side by side, patterns of admirable manhood, yet representatives of creeds most deeply hostile. Thus, in concrete presentment, Lessing teaches impressively, what he had often elsewhere inculcated in a less varied way, one of the grandest lessons, that nobleness is bound to no confession of faith.

It was his thought—and here many will think he

went too far—that every historic religion is in some sense divine, a necessary evolution, from the conditions under which it originates. What a man believes is a matter of utter indifference if his life is not good.

Goldwin Smith, in a paper in the *Nineteenth Century*, in which some injustice is done to the Jewish character and the facts of Jewish history, declares that Nathan the Wise is an impossible personage, the pure creation of the brain of the dramatist. Lessing, however, as is well known, found the suggestion for his superb figure in Moses Mendelssohn, and as I have given with some detail the facts of the life of the grand Israelite, it must have appeared that there are abundant data for concluding that Lessing's Jew was no mere fancy sketch. It may be said, in truth, that the character is exceptional, and that Jews, as the world knows them, are something quite different. But among the votaries of what creed, pray, would not such a character be exceptional! If exceptional, it is not unparalleled, as we shall hereafter see. Judaism is capable of giving birth to humane and tolerant spirits, even in our time, and such spirits are not at all unknown in its past annals.





CHAPTER XVI.

THE MONEY KINGS.

IN no department at the present day will the conspicuous ability of the Jew be so readily conceded as in that of business. Whether as great practical operators, or as political economists, like Ricardo, no class of men have so close a hold of both theory and practice. It seems strange enough to us that trade, in all its various forms, than which no human transactions are now considered more honorable and legitimate, was once held to be disgraceful, to a large extent unlawful. It was indispensable to the on-going of society, and therefore, of necessity, tolerated. The agents of business, however, have, for the most part, been held in ill-repute, or at least in low regard, from antiquity almost to the present day.

Says Cicero: "Those sources of emolument are condemned that incur the public hatred; such as those of tax-gatherers and usurers. We are likewise to account as ungentle and mean the gains of all hired workmen, whose source of profit is not their art, but their labor; for their very wages are the consideration of their servitude. We are also to despise all who retail from merchants goods for prompt sale, for they never can succeed unless they

lie most abominably. All mechanical laborers are by their profession mean, for a workshop can contain nothing befitting a gentleman." Toward commerce on a large scale, indeed, Cicero is somewhat more lenient: "As to merchandizing, if on a small scale it is mean, but if it is extensive and rich, bringing numerous commodities from all parts of the world, and giving bread to numbers without fraud, it is not so despicable." Still the moralist thinks it is in a measure despicable, for he straightway proceeds to commend the course of the merchant who, in good time, abandons his calling: "If, satiated with his profits, he shall from the harbor step into an estate and lands, such a man seems most justly deserving of praise; for of all gainful professions, nothing better becomes a well-bred man than agriculture." *

This view of trade, held by one of the wisest of the ancients, has prevailed almost to our own time. The ill-repute accorded to the agents of commerce has of course fallen abundantly upon the Jews. Accusations of exceptional sordidness and avarice brought against them we may be sure are often unfounded. How different from the view of our predecessors has come to be modern judgment with respect to taking interest for money? To take interest is the unquestioned right of every lender, and whether this interest be large or small, four per cent. or forty per cent., is a matter, as most sensible men now believe, which should be left to take care of itself, unrestricted by law. If the risk is great the borrower expects to pay correspondingly; if the risk is small,

* Offices, I, 42.

the lender contents himself with a trifle. The picture which has been drawn of Jewish avarice is far from being an entire fiction, but let the circumstances be always remembered. If the Jew grew greedy in his money-lending, the world often closed to him every avenue of effort except the one narrow, sordid channel. The Christian set himself against him like flint. Can the Jew be blamed that he skinned the flint?

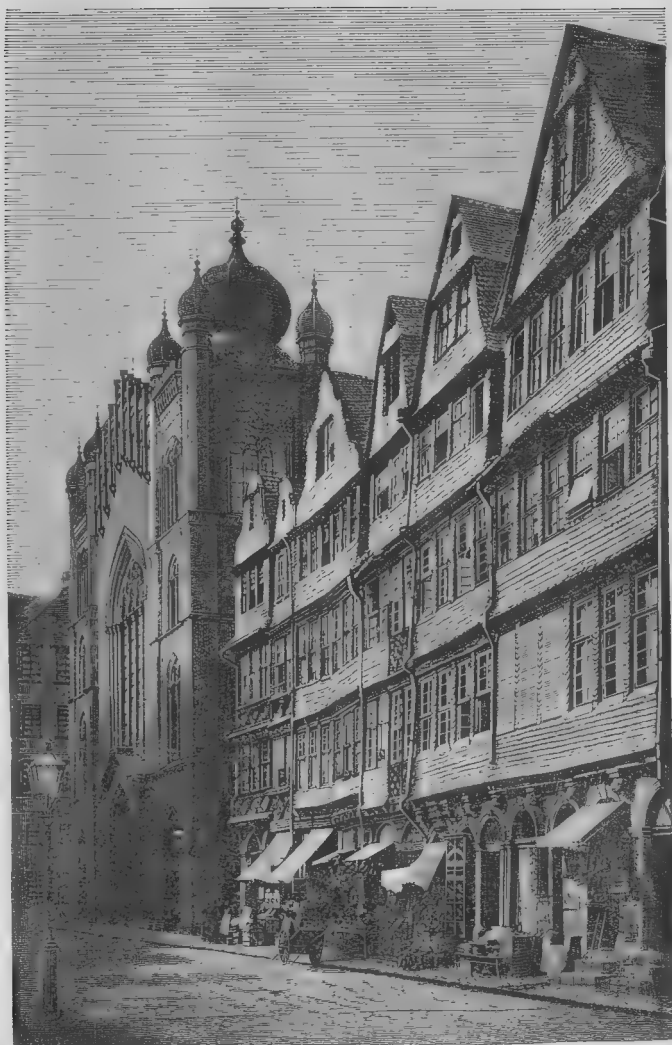
In some ways, men who in the past have been regarded with abhorrence, are seen by our fuller light to have been benefactors. The cautious creditor who looks narrowly at the borrower, who forecloses the mortgage promptly and firmly when the due payment fails, and who exacts to the last cent the principal and interest,—has not the time gone by for calling such men only hard-souled money-getters, and for accusing them of grinding the faces of the poor? Ought we not rather to look upon them as agents of the greatest value in the discipline and education of society? What lessons they enforce upon the idle, the unpunctual, the improvident! The thrifty and industrious have nothing to fear from them; the influence of such lenders in a community is to drive out shiftlessness—to make all careful and diligent. It may be affirmed that the Jews, through the long ages when they have been vilified as so sordid and covetous, administered to the world a most important schooling. No doubt they have been sometimes rapacious, but it could not well have been otherwise. While all other avenues were closed to the Jew, the jealousy of artisans on

the one hand excluding them from the handicrafts much more strictly than American mechanics shut out negroes and Chinese,—on the other hand the higher professions and public life being quite inaccessible, there was no path for them but in the one despised direction. What wonder that there was sometimes overreaching, and that a habit of taking the largest advantage of the hard world which maltreated them so cruelly, should have sprung up and become hereditary? When his prejudices have not acted, the Jew has been charitable and generous. Among themselves there has not usually been mean withholding of aid. Even where his prejudices have stood in the way, the number of instances is not small where the Jew has nobly surmounted them, rising into a charity extended even toward his persecutors.

In trade and exchange, the Jew in the darkest times has had sufficient vigor and shrewdness to flourish; as society has become humane and established,—as the rights of property have been recognized and made secure, straightway the children of Jacob step to the front, become the kings of market and bourse, and by the might of money make a way for themselves. Men like Spinoza and Moses Mendelssohn, with their great intellectual power and beautiful spirit, have caused the world to respect their race. Israel, however, has brought to bear coarser instruments, which have been more effective, perhaps, in breaking for her a path to a better place. And now let us glance at the career of a remarkable family.

The streets in the Juden-gasse at Frankfort are dark even by day; the worn thresholds are still in place that have been stained with blood in the old massacres; the houses are furrowed and decrepit as if they had shared in the scourgings which their owners have undergone. A picturesque, gabled dwelling rises not far from the spot where once stood the gate within which the Jews were barred at night-fall, and behind which they sometimes sought to shelter themselves when the wolves of persecution were upon their track. Here lived one hundred years ago Meyer Anselm, whose surname, derived from the sign above his door, was Rothschild. The money-changer had raised himself from a low position by unusual dexterity.* By a touch of the finger he could tell the value of any strange coin; at the same time he had won a name as an honest man. At length into the Rhine region, in the year 1793, came pouring the legions of the red republicans from France. The princes fled in terror from the invasion, and the landgrave of Hesse Cassel, driving up to the door of the Jew, in the confusion, surprised him with this address: "I know of old your trustiness. I confide all I have in the world to you. Here is my treasure; here are the jewels of my family. Save the jewels if you can, and do with the money as you choose." The landgrave became a fugitive, and within an hour or two the *sans culottes*, taking possession of the city, were plundering high and low. Neither Jew nor Christian escaped, Meyer Anselm suffering with the rest.

* Several interesting facts in this sketch are derived from a letter of "Junot's" in the *Philadelphia Press*.



IN THE FRANKFORT JUDEN-GASSE.

Ten years later, with the coming of Napoleon into power, stability was again restored. The landgrave, returning, called at the Red Shield in the Juden-gasse of Frankfort, with small hope of receiving a good report. "Well, here I am, friend Meyer, escaped with nothing but life." To his astonishment, the faithful trustee had been able through all the trouble of the time to conduct affairs prosperously. While his own means had been plundered, he had saved in some hiding-place in the cellar-wall the treasure of the prince. The heirloom jewels were untouched; with the money he had made a million; and he now restored all to the wondering landgrave, principal and interest. This was the beginning of the marvellous career of the great house of Rothschild. The prince spread far and wide the story of his rescue from ruin. One may well suspect that the shrewd old hawk of the Juden-gasse had had all along a careful eye toward the comfortable feathering of his own nest. At any rate, no better policy for the advancement of his interests could have been hit upon than this honesty in the affairs of the distressed prince. In ten years he was the money king of Europe, transmitting to his able sons, when he himself died in 1812, a proud inheritance which they well knew how to improve.

Heinrich Heine has left an interesting account of being conducted by Ludwig Börne through the Juden-gasse of Frankfort, both of them at the time poor Jewish boys, but destined in after years to become the most famous writers of Germany. It was the evening of the "Hanoukhah," the feast of

lamps. The story has been told how Judas Macabæus, after a victory over the oppressor of his race, had caused the altar of the true God to be reconstructed. It was necessary that the lamps in the sacred porches should be rekindled, to the sound of instruments and the chant of the Levites. Only one vial of oil, however, could be found in the Temple, but, miraculously, the one poor vial sufficed to feed the golden candlestick for a week. This wonder it is which the children of Jacob commemorate in the feast of lamps. Meyer Anselm had gone to his account, but his wife survived, a personality as marked as the old money-changer himself. "Here," said Börne to Heine, pointing to the weather-beaten house, "dwells the old woman, mother of the Rothschilds, the Letitia who has borne so many financial Bonapartes. In spite of the magnificence of her kingly sons, rulers of the world, she will never leave her little castle in the Juden-gasse. To-day she has adorned her windows with white curtains in honor of the great feast of joy. How pleasantly sparkle the little lights which she has kindled, with her own hands, to celebrate a day of victory! While the old lady looks at these lamps, the tears start in her eyes, and she remembers with a sad delight that younger time when her dear husband celebrated the Hanoukhah with her. Her sons then were yet little children, who planted their silver-branched lamps upon the floor, and, as is the custom in Israel, jumped over them in childish ecstasy."

On his death-bed Meyer Anselm made his five sons bind themselves by an oath that they would

remain faithful Jews, that they would always carry on business in company, that they would increase money as much as possible, but never divide it, and that they would consult their mother on all affairs of importance. The old mother long survived her husband. She had a singular reason for never sleeping away from her poor home in the *Juden-gasse*; she felt that her remaining there was in some way connected with the fortune of her sons. H. C. Andersen draws a picturesque scene, the open door of the house of one of her sons at Frankfort, when he had become a financial prince, rows of servants with lighted candles on heavy silver candlesticks, between them the old mother carried down stairs in an arm-chair. The son kisses reverently the mother's hand as she nods genially right and left, and they bear her to the poor lodging in the despised quarter. The luxury of sovereigns was prepared for her, but that the good fortune of her sons depended upon her remaining where she had borne them was her superstition.

The wish of the father was conscientiously fulfilled. The house abounded in wealth, and in children and grandchildren. The five sons, Anselm, Solomon, Nathan, Charles, and James, divided among themselves the principal exchanges of the world, were diplomatically represented in foreign lands, regulating all their affairs, their dowries, marriages, and inheritances, by their own family laws. Nathan Meyer, the third son of Anselm, who became head of the London house early in the present century, was the leader of the family. He went to England a youth

of twenty-one, with a portion of about \$100,000. Establishing himself in Manchester as manufacturer, merchant, and banker, he became a millionaire in six years. Removing then to London, his famous career in connection with the government began. In every move he was adroit as a fox, and yet full of audacity. He managed in surprising ways to obtain news, breeding carrier-pigeons, employing the fastest vessels, discovering short routes for uniting the great capitals, using his superior information often with too little scruple, but in ways which few business men would question. On the memorable 18th of June, 1815, the sharp eyes of Nathan Meyer watched the fortunes of Waterloo as eagerly as those of Napoleon or Wellington. He found some shot-proof nook near Hougomont, whence he peered over the field,—saw the charge before which Picton fell, the countercharge of the Enniskilleners and Scotch Grays, the immolation of the French Cuirassiers, the seizure of La Haye Sainte at the English centre, the gradual gathering of the Prussians, and at last the catastrophe, as the sunset light threw the shadow of the poplars on the Nivelles road across the awful wreck, and the "*sauve qui peut*" of the panic-stricken wretches arose, who fled in the dusk before the implacable sabres of Blücher. When the decision came, the alert observer cried, exultingly: "The house of Rothschild has won this battle!" Then, mounting a swift horse which all day had stood saddled and bridled, he rode through the short June night at a gallop, reaching, with daybreak, the shore of the German ocean. The waters were toss-

ing stormily, and no vessel would venture forth. The eager Jew, hurrying restlessly along the shore, found a bold fisherman at last, who, for a great bribe, was induced to risk his craft and himself. In the cockle-shell, drenched and in danger of foundering, but driving forward, the English shore was at length gained, and immediately after, through whip and spur, London.

It was early morning of June 20th when he dropped upon the capital, as if borne thither upon the enchanted mantle of the Arabian Nights. Only gloomy rumors, so far, had reached the British world. The hearts of men were depressed, and stocks had sunk to the lowest. No hint of the truth fell from the lips of the travel-worn but vigilant banker, so suddenly at his post in St. Swithin's Lane. Simply, he was ready to buy consols as others were to sell. With due calculation, all appearance of suspicious eagerness was avoided. He moved among the bankers and brokers, shaking his head lugubriously. "It is a sad state of affairs," his forlorn face seemed to say; "what hope is there for England?" and so his head went on shaking solemnly, and those who met him felt confirmed in their impression that England had gone by the board, and that it was perhaps best to get away in time, before the French advanced guard took possession of the city. But he bought consols, for some unaccountable reason, and his agents were in secret everywhere, ready to buy, though a panic seemed to be impending. So passed June 20th—so passed June 21st. On the evening of that day the exchange closed, and the chests of Nathan

Meyer were crammed with paper. An hour later, came galloping into the city the government courier, with the first clear news of victory. London flashed into bonfires and illuminations. The exchange opened next day with every thing advanced to fabulous prices. In the south corner, under a pillar which



NATHAN MEYER ROTHSCHILD.

was known as his place, leaned the operator so matchless in swiftness and audacity. His face was pale, his eye somewhat jaded; but his head, for some reason, had lost its unsteadiness. His face, too, had lost its lugubriousness, but had a dreamy, happy expression, as if he beheld some beatific vision. The little gentleman had made ten millions of dollars.

The house of Rothschild, it has been said, was rapacious, as well as bold and full of tact, often showing toward the hard world the ancient Hebrew implacability, and stripping it without mercy. When England in the struggle with Napoleon was sore pressed to supply its fleets and armies, the Rothschilds, buying up all the available food and clothing, are accused of having caused prices to advance largely; at the same time they possessed themselves of all the gold. Supplies must be purchased of the house, and when the settlement came, gold must also be purchased at a great premium. The treasury bought gold of the Rothschilds to pay its obligations to the Rothschilds, and so the child of Jacob flayed the Gentile with a two-edged sword. Wellington, it is said, could never afterward endure the family, and put many a slight upon them, even while they held between thumb and finger the princes of Europe. The famous martinet was familiar with military, but not with business, expedients. It is not probable that the financiers of any bourse in the world, at the present time, could condemn the methods of the able Hebrews without condemning themselves.

So grew great the house of Rothschild. Its whole course was a marvel of enterprise. Its boldness brought it sometimes to the brink of ruin, but more often the Jews' shekels were breeding like rabbits. Now it acquired the monopoly of supplying the world with quicksilver, now it saved a bankrupt monarchy from destruction, now it turned aside the march of armies. The five sons of the wrinkled old money-changer of the red shield in the Frankfort

Juden-gasse, who had played as little children on the Maccabæan festival with their seven-branched silver candlesticks, held court as money kings in London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Naples. They were financial agents of all the important governments, conductors of every money transaction upon a large scale. Meantime the oath sworn to the dying father was respected. The brothers were bound by the strongest ties, their children intermarried, they got all they could, and kept all they got, until men scarcely dared to name their wealth. It was a giddy and harassing eminence. One day in 1836, Nathan Meyer, a man scarcely past middle age, left London to attend the marriage of his eldest son in a distant city of the continent. Weeks passed; at length a little incident happened at Brighton, exciting at first slight wonder, but afterward gaining more fully the world's attention. An idle marksman, catching sight of a bird which, after breasting the breeze of the English channel, was flying somewhat heavily over the town, its wings drooping as if from a long passage, brought it down by a lucky shot. It proved to be a carrier-pigeon, about whose neck was tied a slip of paper, dated only the day before, in a far-away part of Europe. It contained only the three French words: "*Il est mort.*" The marksman wondered who the mysterious dead man could be, and speculated with his neighbors over the slip. At length it was made plain. The bird whose flight was interrupted was carrying to St. Swithin's Lane news of the great banker's death,—a timely message, that sail might be reefed and all be tight and trim for

the shock, when perhaps after a fortnight's time, by slow-moving coach and bark, the news should reach the world that the money king no longer lived.

Lionel Rothschild, eldest son of Nathan Meyer, and his successor as head of the London house, was, in a different way, not less famous than his father. He was of agreeable person and manners, the friend of royalty and the nobility, himself at last ennobled, and of great political influence, even before he sat in Parliament. He became the central figure in the struggle for the abrogation of Jewish disabilities. He was elected to Parliament in 1847, the first son of his race so honored; but for ten years, as he stood before the bar of the House of Commons to take the oath, he was each year rejected, because his uplifted hand, upon the enunciation of the words "on the faith of a Christian," fell promptly to his side. The Israelite yielded by no jot, but the Christian at last gave way. Baron Lionel's palace in London adjoined Apsley House, the mansion of Wellington, and bore on its front the arms of the German empire, the consul-generalship of which was handed down through the generations of the family. Great statesmen were his guests, the princes of the royal family made a point of being present at the weddings and christenings of his children, ambassadors of the highest powers came to sign as witnesses, and the sovereign sent gifts.

The career of James, the son of Anselm Meyer who became head of the Paris house, is no less extraordinary than that of Nathan Meyer in London.

After the overthrow of Napoleon, the allies required from the restored Bourbon, Louis XVIII., the immense sum of 200,000,000 francs, as an indemnity for their sacrifices in bringing about the consummation. James Rothschild first became a great power in France, through his successful conduct of this immense operation. With soul as haughty as the royal line to whose relief he had come, he demanded social recognition for himself and wife. "What!" cried the Duchesse d'Angoulême, daughter of the king, "the chair of a Jew in the royal circle! They forget the ruler of France is the most Christian king." The demand was refused; but Baron James, for he had acquired a title, established in the magnificent palace presented by Napoleon I. to his step-daughter Queen Hortense de Beauharnais, waited for his opportunity. When at length, at the revolution of 1830, the house of Orleans supplanted the Bourbons, it was the Hebrew parvenu who made it possible for Louis Philippe to mount the throne. The social barrier was now surmounted. The monarchy itself only existed at the Baron's pleasure. His family were as splendidly lodged as royalty itself at the Tuileries. Madame la Baronne gave the law to the social world. Paris followed her beck, and at the fashionable watering-places, in magnificence of raiment, in ornaments and equipages, she outdazzled the sovereigns. But the ambition of the Israelite was insatiable. He used his high position for further money-making, and was accused of showing little loyalty except to his own faith and race. The sons of the various houses of Rothschild in general, with

the exception of the branch in England, even while deciding the fate of nations hold themselves, as it were, above politics. Parties and governments shift, revolutions come and go, dynasty succeeding dynasty ; but every turn of the political wheel drops gold into their ever-hungry coffers.

Often they have cared little to respect the feelings, reasonable or otherwise, of the world which they have substantially swayed. In the time of Baron James at Paris, the journals were full of hits at the alleged meanness and vulgarity which, it was insisted, the house of Rothschild coupled with their magnificence. Millions, it was charged, went in luxurious display, but rarely a sou for art or public improvements. One finds such stories as follow : One day, at a festival, Rothschild was approached by a lady who asked from him a contribution for a charitable object. The baron dropped a gold piece into her box, which the lady, whose attention at the moment was attracted elsewhere, did not perceive. She repeated her request, whereupon the rich man curtly declared he had already given. "Pardon," said the lady, "I did not see you, but I believe you." "And I," said a witty princess who stood near, "saw it, but I do not believe it." Some one once related before Scribe, the dramatist, that Rothschild had the evening before lost ten napoleons at play, without an expression of regret. "Nothing surprising in that," was the quick remark ; "great griefs are always voiceless." But Plutus elbowed his way cavalierly forward, caring little for gibes or harsher criticism. "How is Madame la Baronne ?" politely inquired a

man of high rank, who met the Jew at the opera. "What's that to you," was the rejoinder, as he turned his back. To Prince Paul of Württemberg, who was once his guest at dinner, the baron took pleasure in being roughly familiar. "Paul, let me help you to some of this Johannisberg," at length he began. As the prince did not reply, the presuming host repeated the remark; upon which his highness, with his feathers well ruffled, beckoning to the steward, said: "Do you not hear? the baron is addressing you," and left the house.

Baron James could snub a duke, or even a sovereign, with perfect self-possession, but there was one man by whom he seemed to be cowed and mastered, the brilliant Heinrich Heine, one of his own race, already more than once mentioned in these pages, and whom we shall hereafter attentively consider. Heine was often at the banker's palace, maintaining his intimacy, not through any obsequiousness, but by a kind of spell which his bitter tongue exercised over the host. As Heine declared, he was received "*famillionairement*," because the poor banker wished to be the first to hear the evil which his reckless guest was going to say about him. One day, as the baron was drinking a glass of the Neapolitan wine called "*Lacrimæ Christi*," he remarked on the strangeness of the name, and wondered how it could have originated. "That's easy enough," said Heine; "it means, translated, that Christ shed tears to have such good wine wasted on Jews like you.

As Baron Lionel, in London, was more courtly and gracious than his pushing father, so Baron

Alphonse, the son of James, showed to the world a less brusque exterior than might have been expected from the atmosphere in which he had been educated. Napoleon III. received him almost as a member of the imperial family. A palace of the Orleans house, in the Rue St. Honoré, became his Paris home, while for a country-seat he bought the magnificent ducal estate of Ferrières, thirty miles from the city. Here the display was profuse and ostentatious beyond all example. A great fête, given to the court in 1869, cost a million francs, and the gold and silver plate which the sovereign had used was melted down after the dinner that it might serve no humbler guests. It was a proper fate that the ruler who could countenance such coarse wastefulness, should be driven within a twelvemonth from his power. The house of Rothschild, however, floated buoyant on the waves of the stormy upheaval, saw the Prussians enter with little regret, and was even spared by the Commune, when all else was subjected to destruction or pillage.





CHAPTER XVII.

SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE.

IN a worldly sense, nothing can be more brilliant than the career of the great family of Rothschild. Before their time there have been rich Hebrews; but, whether from the extraordinary ability of the men, or whether because now circumstances have made such a thing possible, as never before, such an aggregation of wealth has never before been known in the hands of a few individuals. The power they have wielded in consequence of it has been enormous, and has contributed essentially to lift their whole race into a prominent position before the world. Can the career of the family be called an honorable one? Before many a transaction of theirs the moralist will shake his head dubiously, as perplexed as poor Nathan Meyer seemed to be on the London Exchange on those June days in 1815. Let us refer for a moment to an old-fashioned way of looking at these things. To cite once more Cicero, we are told in his "*De Officiis*," a story of certain vessels which, in a time of great scarcity at Rhodes, set sail thither in company from Alexandria, in Egypt, loaded with corn. One ship, swifter than the rest, and with a more skilful captain, outsailed its com-

panions, and arrived at its anchorage near the Colossus, while the remainder of the fleet was several hours distant. The newly arrived captain is straightway surrounded by a hungry crowd, who, quite ignorant of the abundance close at hand, are willing to give him an enormous price for his cargo. "What now does right require?" asks the old moralist. Is the captain justified in keeping quiet, letting the people find out for themselves, and taking the immense price,—or is he in duty bound to tell the Rhodians there is provision enough three hours away to feed them all? Put the case to a crowd on 'Change in any modern city, what would the reply be likely to be? Cicero was in no doubt. In his view, there was no right course but for the captain to tell the people frankly that the other ships were coming; to conceal the fact was to take an unfair advantage. Ought Nathan Meyer to have told the Londoners of Wellington's victory, or did he do right to keep quiet and pocket his ten millions? and in a thousand other instances in the history of the great house, do we find the dealing fair and above-board; or is it rather sharp practice that trenches all along upon dishonesty?

That the old heathen would have condemned much of the cunning scheming and adroit manipulation, there can be no manner of doubt. For our modern day, let our preachers and moralists speak for themselves. It would be ludicrous, however, to hear criticisms upon such a course from the American business world. You inquire as you ride with a friend through some great city: "Who is building

this magnificent palace here on the bon-ton boulevard?" "That belongs to A, so famous for his corner in butter last fall. To be sure a hundred weaker operators came to the ground, and many a poor family went with their bread dry, but it was capitally managed, and perhaps he will be president of the Board of Trade." "Who drives yonder superb horses and equipage?" That is B, so lucky the other day at the 'bucket-shop'; and he is about to dine at the club with C, who makes the world pay five prices for that indispensable commodity which he is shrewd enough to control." Now who are A and B and C? "Hebrew sharpers"? Far from it. The first is a Vermonter, whose ancestor held the torch while Ethan Allen broke down the gate at Ticonderoga. The line of the second goes back to the "Mayflower"; and as to the third, his great-grandfather, in the heart of old Virginia, sold George Washington the very hatchet which Truth, as we all know, bears for an emblem, as Hope carries the anchor, and Faith the cross, and Justice the scales,—Americans all, unmixed, and of the finest strains. It may be suggested to Americans inclined to find fault with "Jew sharpers," that their house is of glass from which it is not wise to throw stones.

Over-harsh judgment of the ways of modern commerce are perhaps possible. The Israelite businessman sometimes trades in old clothes, and sometimes is finance minister of an empire; his Yankee counterpart sometimes peddles pop-corn on a railroad train, or as a railroad king brings now prosperity, now ruin, to whole States by a nod of his head. Much that

goes for rapacity, over-reaching, criminal indifference to human welfare, possibly deserves far milder characterization. With what genius, at any rate, does the son of Jacob move in this tangled world of affairs—so energetic, so persistent, so adroit,—springing to the leadership so dexterously, whoever may be his competitors! As he invented banking in the middle ages, so now in our more complex modern life, it is the Jew who leads the way in the devising of expedients, in the planning of adjustments, by which order can be brought out of the perplexity—new methods of manipulation coming to pass under his dexterous hand, the financial domain spun across with bewildering devices, until the plain man finds it all unintelligible, however necessary it may be in the confusion of immense and intricate relations.

Good types of this strange Semitic ingenuity, often blameless, often beneficent, but on the other hand often unscrupulous,—in ways, however, which it is not always easy to find fault with,—full of audacity, full also of cunning,—which sees to it narrowly that the bold bound shall not overleap or fall short of the precise aim, one may find in the great French operators Isaac and Emile Pereire. Natives of Bordeaux, they began their careers in Paris as brokers. Growing in wealth, they were the first Frenchmen to build railroads, managing to obtain for them money and credit when they were looked upon askance as disturbing, perhaps dangerous, innovations. Their enterprises became colossal, until, from being the railroad kings of France, they grasped at power over the whole continent of Europe, organizing and con-

trolling companies by the score, buying up, for instance, at a stroke, all the government railroads of Austria. It is said the Pereires are to be looked upon as the originators of all those intricacies of modern railroad-finance, whose nomenclature is so constantly in the mouths of the men on 'Change, but before which the plain citizen despairs as having a meaning quite impenetrable,—common stock, preferred stock, first, second, third, perhaps thirteenth mortgage-bonds, floating-debt, watering, credit mobilier, and what not. The practice of founding joint-stock corporations for the sole purpose of negotiating the stock and realizing on it, is said to be strictly their own invention, copied to a calamitous extent throughout the entire civilized world. The Pereires, the elder brother in particular, were zealous philanthropists, combining in a most incongruous way heartless selfishness in business matters with universal charity. The account which is given of them declares: "They illustrate the quaint mixture of virtue and vice in human nature. They thought themselves honestly virtuous, while stern moralists may think them simply vicious. In reality they were a novel mixture of good hearts and egregious business habits which made them rich while others were impoverished."*

It is pleasant to be able to show, after the consideration of careers somewhat questionable, such as have just been detailed, that the Hebrew businessman is by no means necessarily rapacious. One of

* *Boston Advertiser.*

the noblest and most picturesque types of modern philanthropy has come forth directly from the inner circle of these great financial princes, a man whose labors, journeys, and benefactions, prompted by a wise and generous spirit, are as unparalleled as the shrewdness, audacity, and persistence through which his kindred and partners succeeded in winning the world.

Sir Moses Montefiore,* whose death is announced just as this book goes to press, as full of honors as of years, received the homage of the whole civilized world, October 24, 1884, upon his hundredth birthday. He united in himself all that is most characteristic of his race in mental and physical respects. A close observer of the old Mosaic law, he showed in his body the astonishing vigor which a faithful following of the sanitary provisions of Pentateuch and Talmud may bring to pass. In mind he had the characteristic Jewish sharpness which won for him on the exchange a colossal fortune ; in spirit he had the Jewish intensity, manifested in his case not in any narrow or selfish way, but in a humanity broad as the world ; at the same time he cherished with perfect devotion the traditions and faith of his forefathers, and anticipated with enthusiasm the day when the throne of David should be again established on the holy mountain at Jerusalem. Few biographies can be cited which offer so much that is extraordinary as the varied story of this elder of the Hebrews, from his youth to his retirement in his quiet home by the sea, in Kent.

* " Life of Sir Moses Montefiore," by Simon Wolfe.



SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE.

His blood was of the best Israelite strain. An ancestor of his was the bold sailor, Lamego, that captain of Vasco de Gama, who brought back to Europe the first intelligence that his admiral had found the passage about the Cape of Good Hope. Of his particular family, whose Italian origin is made plain by the name, Montefiore, the earliest memorial preserved is a silk ritual curtain in the synagogue at Ancona, magnificently embroidered and fringed with gold; this was the work of an ancestress as far back as 1630, and is suspended before the ark on the great festivals. Like the Disraelis, the Montefiores came to England, when at length, through Cromwell, the bars had been removed, and with the present century reached fame and wealth. Moses Montefiore's way to fortune was smoothed by his marriage with the sister-in-law of Nathan Meyer Rothschild. His brother, also, was married to a sister of Nathan Meyer; still a third link bound the families together, for the second son of Nathan Meyer married his first cousin, the niece of Moses Montefiore. With the strong Jewish feeling of clanship, one can understand how close the connection must have become with the great house which possessed such power. Moses Montefiore was, in fact, the broker of the Rothschilds during the most heroic period of the great operators. No suspicion, however, has ever attached to him, of the sharp practice which has sometimes hurt the repute of the famous bankers. Free from all overweening greed, he withdrew early from active business, with a fine fortune indeed, but untainted by the spirit of covetousness, and through constant beneficent

activity, has won for himself the best possible renown.

He set on foot among his people the movement which resulted in the doing away of Jewish disabilities, and at length brought it about that his nephew, Baron Lionel Rothschild, sat in the British Parliament. But most memorable have been his journeys,—one should rather say his lordly progresses,—again and again undertaken, to Africa, to Asia, and throughout the whole of Europe, in behalf of his suffering co-religionists, whose bonds he has broken and whose poverty he has relieved, rather as if he were a magnificent potentate than a simple British citizen. Side by side with his wife, of spirit and energy resembling his own, in a kind of princely state, with a coach and six, or a special train, upon land, and upon sea in French or British frigates placed at his disposal, he discharged his self-imposed missions with a curious pomp. Nothing can be more picturesque than the scenes described as attending these expeditions. Barbaric princes yield humbly to the demand that humanity shall be respected. Sultan, Czar, and Pope, no less than petty princeling and robber captain, give him honor and promise amendment. The Jew's urging, it is felt, is backed by immense power, and his hands scatter largesses such as the coffers of few monarchs could afford.

It is scarcely credible that within fifty years civilized men should have aided and abetted in such enormities as occurred in Damascus and Rhodes in 1840. A Jewish persecution sprang up in those towns, scarcely less terrible than the dark deeds of

those mediæval zealots to which certain of these pages have referred. The inveterate blood-accusation, that Jews had committed murder to obtain human blood for use in their sacrifices, was again made, and fanaticism once more expressed itself in torture and slaughter. Men were scourged to death, as of old; others were blinded and maimed for life; sixty little children, from three to ten years old, were taken from their mothers and shut up without food; by their starvation, the parents were to be forced, through anguish of soul, into confession. Damascus and Rhodes are, to be sure, Turkish cities, but the French Consul of the former town was one of the most active persecutors, and in the latter, the representatives of several civilized powers connived at the cruelties.

Montefiore, living retired in his beautiful Kentish villa, felt his heart stirred at the sufferings of the faithful. He roused civilized Europe to indignation, proceeding himself to the spot where the persecutions were taking place. The French statesman Crémieux, himself of Hebrew race, was at the same time active at the court of Louis Philippe, and elsewhere were heard influential Hebrew voices. It was the British Jew, however, whose hands and tongue were most helpful. He was presently on the spot, backed by all the power of enormous wealth and the might of England. The dead could not be brought back to life, nor could the blinded and crippled regain their lost members, but so far as human means could avail, the wrongs were righted. Out of the agitation grew the powerful "*Alliance Israélite Universelle*," an or-

ganization through which the well-placed Hebrews of civilized lands have sought to make impossible hereafter the renewal of mediæval barbarities.

Sir Moses Montefiore has felt keenly the taunt of Cobbett, that the "Israelite is never seen to take a spade in his hand, but waits, like the voracious slug, to devour what has been produced by labor in which he has no share." In Palestine and elsewhere, he has sought to make the Jews agricultural and industrial, and in his records seems never more pleased than when he can describe Hebrew farmers and artisans. Great though his might has everywhere been through his personal force and the power always behind him, he has met with his rebuffs. Said Prince Paskievitch, the Russian governor of Poland, to him, when he was urging upon that official the propriety of doing something for the education of his people: "God forbid! the Jews are already too clever for us. How would it be if they got good schooling!"

The pictures are touching and dramatic which are given in the accounts of Sir Moses Montefiore's journeys, and none are finer than those drawn by his wife, Judith, his frequent companion, a devoted Hebrew like her husband. Both believed in the restoration of Israel to the Holy Land, the soil of which they loved as if they were native to it, with all the wondrous Hebrew patriotism. On one occasion, as they arrive, she breaks out: "Anchor was cast in the Bay of Beyrout, and magnificent was the scene presented to our view. Immediately before us rose the lofty mountains of Lebanon, precipitous and crowned with snow, in strange contrast with the

yellow, barren shore, and, stranger still, the glowing sky, and the dazzling rays of the sun, wrapping the town of Sidon itself in a blaze of morning splendor."

"At the ancient Gilead, how many solemn though pleasurable thoughts floated through our minds! Oh, how does the heart of the pilgrim cling to and yearn over the words of the prophet! 'I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon Mount Ephraim and Gilead. In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve.'"

The strain of the writer rises into solemn rapture as Jerusalem is approached: "What the feelings of a traveller are, when among the mountains on which the awful power of the Almighty once visibly rested, and when approaching the city where he placed his name, whence his Law was to go forth to all the world, where the beauty of holiness shone in its morning splendor, and to which, even in its sorrow and captivity, even in its desolation, the very Gentiles, the people of all nations of the earth, as well as its own children, look with profound awe and admiration,—oh, what the feelings of the traveller are on such a spot, and when listening to the enraptured tones of Israel's own inspired king, none can imagine but those who have had the felicity to experience them!"

They approach, probably, by the same place "Scopus," whence Alexander saw in the distance



the vision of the Temple, and whence Titus caught sight of the mighty ramparts which his army must force. "Solemn as were the feelings excited by the melancholy desolateness of the rocky hills and valleys through which we were passing, they were suddenly lost in a sense of indescribable joy—for now the Holy City itself rose full into view, with all its cupolas and minarets reflecting the splendor of the heavens. Dismounting from our horses, we sat down and poured forth the sentiments which so strongly animated our hearts in devout praises to Him whose mercy and providence alone had thus brought us, in health and safety, to the city of our fathers." Passing on, the train encamps upon the Mount of Olives, separated from the town by the narrow ravine. "The pure air of the Mount breathed around us with the most refreshing fragrance; and as we directed our attention to the surrounding view, Jerusalem was seen in its entire extent at our feet, the Valley of Jehoshaphat to our left, and, in the distance, the dark, misty waves of the Dead Sea."

They drew near Jerusalem on the following day in a magnificent cavalcade. The Turkish governor led the way, attended by his officers, and an escort in costly and brilliant dress mounted upon the finest Arab steeds. It would have been impossible to pay more honor to a king. Through the Gate of the Tribes the city was entered, and, as the Jewish quarter was reached, bands of music and choirs of singers welcomed the arrival, while a vast crowd clapped their hands in joy. Montefiore paid his first visit



VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT OR KIDRON.

to the synagogue, where, being called to the Sepher, or sacred book, he offered prayer in the Jewish manner for those present and also for English friends. Judith Montefiore was allowed the honor of lighting four lamps in front of the shrine, and putting the bells on the Sepher. During this sojourn, and also at other times, for Montefiore has repeatedly visited the Holy Land, charity was bestowed as wisely as profusely, oppression was made to relax its hold, and provision made for the education of the Jews in intelligence and habits of thrift. "Farewell, Holy City!" exclaims Judith Montefiore, at last. "Blessed be the Almighty who has protected us while contemplating the sacred scenes which environ thee! Thankful may we ever be for his manifold mercies! May the fountain of our feelings evermore run in the current of praise and entire devotion to his will and his truth, till the time shall arrive when the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads!"

In reading the story of Montefiore's life, one feels transported back to the days of the patriarchs, so astonishing is his long-continued strength. After reaching eighty, he undertook four of his great philanthropic journeys—two to Jerusalem, one to Roumania, and one to Russia. Of the feats of his age, none is more interesting than his visit to the Sultan of Morocco, whose half million Jewish subjects had become exposed to persecution, largely, as in the Damascus case, through the incitement of the representatives of Christian powers resident among them.

A French frigate conveyed him from Gibraltar to Tangier, where his landing had a touch of the comic. "Our captain," writes one of his retinue, "had contrived a kind of car, in which, for want of a suitable landing-place, Sir Moses might be borne over a considerable extent of shallow water between the boat and the shore. His porters, and a great many of the laboring class of Israelites were wading, and his superior size thus conspicuously moving over the water, surrounded by a shabby amphibious group, appeared to me like a travestied representation of Neptune among the Tritons." When matters at Tangier had been put to rights, Sir Moses set out once more from Gibraltar, this time with an English frigate at his disposal, to make his way to the city of Morocco. Arriving with an imposing suite, he was received by the Sultan with the utmost honor. The barbaric prince, surrounded by the flower of his army, mounted upon a charger whose white color indicated that the highest deference was shown, met the strangers. An important edict was issued, granting all for which the guest had asked. Thus relief was afforded not only to Jews, but to Christians also, for the catholic intercessor had besought of the Mohammedan good treatment for men of all confessions.

Sir Moses stood in Jerusalem for the last time in his ninetieth year, on a mission for the improvement of the Palestinian Jews. Something of the fervor of the psalms pervades the pages of the old man's diary. On the night before reaching the sacred shore, "Myriads of celestial luminaries, each of them as large and bright almost as any of the radiant

planets in the Western horizon, were now emitting their silvery rays of light in the spangled canopy over us. Sure and steady our ship steered towards the coast of the land so dearly beloved, summoning all to sleep; but few of the passengers retired that night. Every one of them appeared to be in meditation. It was silent all around us—silent, so that the palpitation of the heart might almost be heard. It was as if every one had the words on his lips: ‘Ah, when will our eyes be gladdened by the first glance of the Holy Land! When shall we be able to set foot on the spot which was the long-wished for goal of our meditations!’ Such were that night the feelings of every Gentile passenger on board. And what other thoughts, I ask, could have engrossed the mind of an Israelite? The words of Rabbi Jehuda Halevi, which he uttered when entering the gates of Jerusalem, now came into my mind: ‘The kingdoms of idolatry will all change and disappear; thy glory alone, O Zion, will last forever; for the Eternal has chosen thee for his abode. Happy the man who is now waiting in confiding hope to behold the rising glory of thy light!’”

But while the heart of Sir Moses could thus rhapsodize, a cool and practical good sense was shown, as always, in his conduct. On the way to Jerusalem he inspected narrowly the farms which he had before set in operation, counted the fruit-trees that had been set out, saw to the efficiency of the machines for irrigation, with prudent thrift refused the steam-engines that were petitioned for, because he thought fuel too scarce and skilled labor too scanty; and



GOLDEN GATE.

when he reached at last Jerusalem, set all to work to clean the city to prevent the spread of cholera. Nothing so pleased him as the evidence he found that the Palestinian Jews could be made to work. In his appeal in their behalf he declares: "The Jews in Jerusalem, in every part of the Holy Land, I tell you, do work; are more industrious even than many men in Europe; otherwise none of them would remain alive. But, when the work does not sufficiently pay; when there is no market for the produce of the land; when famine, cholera, and other misfortunes befall the inhabitants, we Israelites, unto whom God revealed himself on Sinai more than any other nation, must step forward and render them help." Practical suggestions follow, which were at once acted upon. In late years the "Montefiore Testimonial Committee" has helped agricultural colonies, established and loaned money to building societies, and in particular made a beginning at Jerusalem of a new and beautiful city outside the Jaffa gate, in which there are already six hundred houses, wholesome and modern, accommodating a population of four thousand.

The generous hand of Sir Moses was a thousand times stretched out in aid of the Gentile as well as the Jew. He helped to build Protestant churches, to found hospitals for the Turk and the Catholic, to lift up the poor of all races and colors. Naturally and properly, however, it was upon his fellow-Jews that his beneficence was for the most part poured out. It is quite possible that at the time of his death, no man upon the face of the earth was more widely

known. The civilized world celebrated his hundredth birthday, and many a barbarian city as well; for his influence has been powerfully felt in Bokhara and Samarcand, as well as in St. Petersburg and Rome,—in Timbuctoo and Peking, as in New York and San Francisco; the Bedouin freebooter, the Turkoman sheik, the Dahoman savage, not less than Czar and Pope, have found their ruthless hands stayed by his powerful intervention.

In face and form the old Hebrew was not less striking than in his years and deeds. He was six feet three inches in height, and stooped but little even at the last. His attire was of the fashion of sixty years ago,—the high-collared coat, the huge white neckcloth and ample frill of the days of George IV. There exists a fine portrait of him, in which things incongruous strangely come together, but for him it is all happily conceived. On a hill overlooking Jerusalem, with its walls and the mosque of Omar in the background, stands his towering form in the costume of a deputy-lieutenant of an English county.

It helps to the picturesqueness of this curious and interesting figure of our times, that he remained a thoroughly orthodox Jew. No one was more constant at the synagogue until within a few years, and even at one hundred he read daily every word of the prescribed prayers. He fasted on the anniversary of the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans, and on the Day of Atonement. The dietary laws of the Pentateuch he obeyed rigorously, and never tasted the flesh of animals that divide not the hoof nor chew the cud. For each Jewish man-child he would have

had the ancient rite of circumcision,—at the passover time must be the feast of unleavened bread,—upon occasion he wore the embroidered *tephillin*, the phylacteries upon his front ;—he discharged in the synagogue the functions of Gabay, Parnass, and long filled the office of Lavadore, washer of the dead, conductor of the solemn rites by which the bodies of the chosen people are carefully made ready for the sepulchre. The supporters on his arms hold aloft banners on which the word “Jerusalem” is inscribed in Hebrew characters, and Jerusalem has been the watchword of his life. When questioned as to his hope of a restoration of Israel, as expressed by the rabbis and prophets, his reply was : “I am quite certain of it ; it has been my constant dream ; Palestine must belong to the Jews, and Jerusalem is destined to become the seat of a Jewish empire.” Of this man it may, indeed, be said, following the words of George Eliot, “he had Oriental sunlight in his blood.”





CHAPTER XVIII.

HEBREW STATESMEN.

THE astonishing deeds of men of Hebrew blood as statesmen, partly because leadership here always impresses men powerfully, partly because it is not until recently that we have seen Jews in this eminence, affect the world more profoundly than the other distinctions. It is startling enough to see within one decade this remnant of a race, a small fraction of the population of Europe, so far forward that a few years ago George Eliot could say: "At this moment the leader of the liberal party in Germany is a Jew, the leader of the Republican party in France is a Jew, and the head of the Conservatives of England is a Jew"; while, as others assert, the foremost Spanish republican, Castelar, is of Jewish descent, and the diplomacy of Russia is guided by minds of the same race.

Upon the career of the eloquent and public-spirited Castelar we will not here dwell. The name of Lasker, though he died among us, is less well-known to American ears than that of Gambetta, and much less familiar than that of Disraeli. Lasker* was, in the German Reichstag, or Parliament, the recognized leader

* "German Political Leaders," Tuttle.

of the great national liberal party (the majority of the body), the ablest debater in Germany, a man with a brave following. It was he who, in company with his fellow-Hebrews, the Frankfort banker Bamberger, and Oppenheim, dared to put a hook into the jaws of leviathan himself, the haughty Prince Bismarck, in his too cavalier dealing with the liberties of the people. One reads with great satisfaction of the triumph of this able, high-minded champion, over the sneering, supercilious Junker party, the German Squirearchy, which makes it its special work to throw obstacles in the path of freedom. They, naturally, beyond the rest of the nation, have felt the traditional dislike of the Jews, and have been accustomed to ask, when any financial scandal came out, with elevated eyebrow and curled lip: "Well, who is it this time, Isaac, or Abraham, or Moses?" as if a swindler must of necessity be a Jew. It was a complete turning of the tables, when Lasker, with adroitness and boldness equally remarkable, brought home some most discreditable railroad delinquencies directly to the doors of Count Itzenplitz and Prince Puttbus, high-born functionaries in especial favor with the great chancellor and the emperor. With all their influence, there was no escape for them from the exposures of the fearless deputy; they hung gibbeted in their fraud, and the scoffers were silenced. A peculiarity of Lasker's oratory was that in his enunciation the syllables were curiously detached, as his speech flowed on in its fluent course. When he rose in his place, a small unimpressive figure, with a high piercing voice pouring itself out in



HERR LASKER.

this singular staccato, all heads bent forward in respectful listening; there was not a man in the empire that could cope with the Hebrew in the intellectual wrestle.

If it excites alarm in Germany that the Jews, not two per cent. in the population, are elbowing themselves into all the best places, France perhaps has scarcely less reason for fear. Those spiders, the brothers Pereire, entangling France, then all Europe, in a web of railroads, then sucking out the life and forces of the ensnared in a revenue of millions, are representatives of a class of great bankers. Much of whatever success and glory the Second Empire can lay claim to is due to the work of Achille Fould, four times Finance Minister; and in the times since, how frequent upon the lips of men have been the names of the republican deputies Crémieux and Gambetta.

Gambetta!* A year or two since, there was perhaps in the world no more interesting name. In the humiliations of his country, in 1870, his efforts to save her were colossal. He was afterwards, as premier, virtual ruler of France, and was almost as certain to become the real ruler had he lived as if the unswerving primogeniture of the old régime were still in force. He was descended from Jews of the Italian city of Genoa. A curious story is told of him in boyhood, which is of interest as betraying in him that strange characteristic intensity of the children of Jacob, and which in Gambetta was manifested constantly afterward in his career. His father sent

* "Certain Men of Mark : Gambetta," Towle.



GAMBETTA.

him to a school which for some reason was distasteful to him. He wrote home that if he were not taken away he would put out one of his eyes. His father laughed at the threat and disregarded the request, and was presently shocked at hearing that the boy had actually put out one of his eyes, at the same time coolly writing that if he were not removed from the hated place he would put out the other. Only a Jewish boy could have resorted to such a measure, so *outré*, so grotesque in the midst of its horrors, for bringing his parent to terms. In 1868, the day came at last when Gambetta, then an active, ambitious young lawyer, was to take the first step toward a wide fame. In defence of newspapers arbitrarily handled by the censors of Napoleon III., he made a speech which, for vivacity, strength of invective, and beauty, is said to be almost without parallel in the French language. It was delivered on a dull afternoon in December, in a little police court of the city. Gambetta spoke for several hours with an audacity and earnestness that completely overawed the tribunal, and he was not interrupted. What he uttered was the rankest treason, a veritable thunderbolt upon the imperial head. If it had been delivered by an ordinary man in an ordinary way, imprisonment would have followed at once. As it was, judge and people sat spell-bound. Rumors ran through the city that a great revolutionary address was in progress, till prudent tradesmen got their shutters ready, and called their children home from school, fearing there would be riots in the streets. Police were on the alert; the cavalry were held ready as on days of barricade. The

daring advocate was, however, left untouched, and next morning was famous.

News of his speech was breathed mysteriously from town to town, though the government watched the telegraph, and within a week printed copies were in the hands of the electors of all France. He was then just thirty years old, always carelessly dressed, nervous, with olive complexion, and intense, brusque ways. A speech soon followed at Toulouse, in which hostility to the empire was more plainly shown, and at once the republicans took him up as their champion. He soon appeared in the Corps Législatif. As the central figure of a group of men sworn to oppose the empire, he pointed out unshrinkingly the follies and knaveries of the imperialist policy, not hesitating to declare his belief that a new order of things was at hand. He once cried out to the minister of Napoleon III., Olivier : "We accept you and your constitution as a bridge to the republic ; that's all." When at length those days of 1870 came, so dark for France, like Frenchmen in general, he had no conception of the abyss upon the brink of which they stood. Not sympathizing with the cry for war with Germany, he yet made no vigorous opposition, and awoke overwhelmed with surprise at the afflictions which prostrated his country. As the forces of the empire were so dismally parried and beaten down, the olive-skinned, one-eyed young deputy sprang to the front with an astonishing vigor. Then first the world at large began to read in the crowding despatches that odd Italian name which afterwards became so familiar. He attained at once to prominence in the

Committee of National Defence, and presently was Minister of the Interior. For some time after the beginning of the Prussian siege, he was at his post in Paris, acute and bold, always crying out against inaction, lavishing upon his disheartened countrymen, as he lashed now the poltroons, now uttered words of hope, such an eloquence as the French chamber has seldom heard. The great Bossuet, in the seventeenth century, was called "the eagle of Meaux." In our time the eagle of France for soaring speech was this impetuous son of the Jew; and appropriately enough, when he had tried in vain by miracles in the forum to make good disasters in the field, there came that picturesque balloon flight of his, in which he sailed through the clouds above the hostile belt of fire about Paris, and from a new eyrie at Tours, while France lay for the most part beneath the foot of the German, faced the danger with voice and talon undismayed!

In those days there was such unheard of impotency in ruler, in generals, in troops, that we knew almost nothing of the few real heroes who fought against fate with gigantic vigor—an astonishing struggle, worthy of the best hearts in any age of that chivalrous nation, though they were borne down. The wrestle of Gambetta was prodigious. Paris for the time was blotted out of France by the Prussian *cordon*. Elsewhere Gambetta was dictator, minister of war and of peace. By wonderful speech and unfaltering courage in the face of the desperate circumstances, he concluded loans, raised armies, appointed generals, quelled dissensions and revolts, combining

in himself, as has been said, the executive faculties of half a hundred officers. If he had known how to handle the sword, those who studied the struggle believe that even then, after Metz and Sedan, he might have saved France. Such armies and leaders as were still left, he tried to make receptacles of his own abounding enthusiasm. His voice was heard everywhere in the southern provinces always counselling advance. He hoped against hope that a little experience would make solid troops out of raw peasant levies, inspirited his colleagues with confident despatches, fired the disheartened soldiers with proclamations that were Napoleonic, to face again and again the iron Prussians. He was undaunted even to the end.

For a moment he retired, but was forced into public life in 1871, being elected deputy by ten departments. After the return of quieter times, Gambetta stood in the fore-front of the Republicans, with a power of moving the masses beyond that of any contemporary. He grew more moderate, passing from a revolutionary leader into a prudent statesman. In quiet times his eloquence is described* as "rich, sensuous, full of heats, showers, lightnings, perfumes of the south." He spoke with an infinity of gesture, a constant play of thought and fancy in his mobile face, leaving upon all an impression of reserved power. But when the occasion called, there was a wild passion in Gambetta absolutely indescribable. "His hollow and resounding voice was like that of some furious prophet of doom. His intense face would

* Towle.

sometimes fly out of the mass of listeners, the more timorous of his side would catch him by the clothing, but he could not be restrained. His arm would be outstretched, and he would cry defiant contradiction or hurl the lie in the teeth of those who ventured to oppose him."

In fact there is nothing reported of those great and burning spirits of the old Revolution, of Camille Desmoulins, of Vergniaud, the Girondin, of the golden-mouthed Mirabeau, indeed, which surpasses what we hear of this towering descendant of the Hebrew. Says a writer describing a stormy scene in the Assembly: "Gambetta was astonishing in the midst of the tumult. He went on with his hollow, resounding voice, with a retort for every aggression, his grand, powerful gestures knowing so well how to give such terrific explosion to anger, such comic force to irony. He went on in disorder, his hair falling over his brow, shaking his head, throwing taunts at his interrupters, distributing sledge-hammer blows, sowing apostrophes and sarcasms broadcast."

Americans in general know little of the politics of France. We have been inclined to belittle the nation, though less of late than in 1870, when the brave people were so strangely panic-struck and delivered over. But down the dark future the wise reader of the signs of the times seems to hear even now a new clash of arms, a sudden, overwhelming spring upon Alsace and Lorraine, an outpouring of molten zeal, as in the revolutionary days, consuming, as it consumed before, Teutonic power and prestige. There was the other day, in France, a man of burning soul

and commanding intellect, fully determined, if occasion served, to attempt this. The idol of masses of his countrymen, with his hand already on the strings of power, a soul perhaps scarcely less potent than that of the other Italian, the earth-shaking man of destiny. Had he lived, the Genoese might have repeated the career of the Corsican.

And now we take up the most singular and fascinating of characters, the adventurer born among outcasts, who had the address to make himself the leader of the haughtiest and most conservative of aristocracies, the Tories of Great Britain.* Born a Jew of the "Sephardim," the *élite* of the race, of a family of Spanish derivation, which, after a sojourn in Venice, came in the last century to England, the Earl of Beaconsfield, Benjamin Disraeli, when twelve years old, through the instrumentality of Samuel Rogers, the poet, who felt that the bright boy ought to have a career, was baptized a Christian.† We shall, however, find no better type of the Jew than he. His descent was written in every trait of his character, as in every feature of his face. The persistency with which he fought his way upward, handicapped by limitations of every kind, by outward circumstances, by personal peculiarities which brought ridicule, his origin in the eyes of the world so contemptible—it is that extraordinary Jewish force. Without dwelling upon his lighter title to fame, his literary career, let us take up at once the

* Brandes : "Life of Beaconsfield."

† His father was Isaac Disraeli, an author of some reputation.

story of his first speech in Parliament, into which he at last pushed himself after disappointments and labors that can scarcely be measured. At length he stood there, the strange, fantastic figure, the olive skin, the thick Jewish nose, the black curl on his forehead, the Oriental passion for glitter and adornment in his blood manifesting itself in excess of jewelry, finical attire, curling and scented hair,—and presumed to call to account Daniel O'Connell, then in the very height of his influence. The great agitator, with his hat tipped on the back of his head, leaning back in an attitude of easy insolence, stared at him in surprise, presently shaking his burly figure as he laughed in his face. The whole House of Commons at length was roaring with mockery at the dandy upstart, who seemed to most of them like some intruding pawnbroker. Showing no pity to the untried and friendless speaker, they laughed him into silence, but before the silence came, there was a memorable manifestation. Raising his voice to a scream which pierced the uproar, and shaking his thin hand at the hostile house, he cried, "The time will come when you will be glad to hear me!"

Thence onward he runs in his marvellous Parliamentary career, speaking on every question, more often the mark of obloquy than eulogy, advocating often policies which few Americans can approve, but always with pluck and fire perfectly indomitable, rising slowly toward leadership, battered as his head became prominent, by every Parliamentary missile, mercilessly lampooned, written down by able editors, ever pushing his way undismayed, until one day the



ISAAC DISRAELI.

world gave in to him and knelt to kiss his feet. It is interesting to read how he was borne up by his noble wife, whom he loved with all his soul. Here is a slight incident, one of many similar ones. Disraeli was to speak in Parliament at an important crisis. He entered the carriage with his wife to drive to Westminster. The coachman, slamming the door violently, caught the lady's hand, injuring it severely. Fearing to disturb her husband, on the eve, as he was, of a great effort, she wrapped it in her handkerchief hastily, without uttering a sound or changing her face, drove, cheerfully chatting to the House, and not until the arrow had been sent with all his steady strength, did the great archer know the circumstance which might have impaired his aim.

Disraeli's public course furnishes points enough to which exception might be taken; perhaps his personal character may have been in many ways open to criticism. But certainly, if a tonic influence goes forth into the world from every man who boldly wrestles with difficulty, no one has done more in this way to brace his generation than this superbly strong and courageous champion, rising from the dust to guide the mightiest and haughtiest power upon the face of the earth, so that it was obedient not only to his deliberate will, but to his caprices. A Christian and an orthodox Christian he was throughout his career, but none the less the most arrogant of Jews. He feared, says his able biographer, Brandes, if he dropped the supernatural origin of Jesus, he would be depriving his race of the nimbus which encircles it, as the people among whom God



LORD BEACONSFIELD.

himself, as the Redeemer of the world, was born. To him Christianity was only Judaism completed, Judaism for the multitude. "He hate Christ! He is the fairest flower and eternal pride of the Jewish race, a son of the chosen royal family of the chosen people,—the people which in an intellectual sense has conquered Europe, and the quarters of the world peopled by Europeans. Northern Europe worships the son of a Jewish mother, and gives him a place at the right hand of the Creator; Southern Europe worships besides, as queen of heaven, a Jewish maiden." Commemorating the glories of Jerusalem, Disraeli bursts out in his "Tancred": "There might be counted heroes and sages who need shrink from no rivalry with the brightest and wisest of other lands,—a lawgiver of the time of the Pharaohs whose laws are still obeyed; a monarch whose reign has ceased three thousand years, but whose wisdom is still a proverb in all the nations of the earth; a teacher whose doctrines have modelled the whole civilized world. The greatest of legislators, the greatest of administrators, the greatest of reformers—what race, extinct or living, can produce such men as these?" "Suppose," exclaims the Jewess Eva, with an earnestness which we may be sure is the real feeling of the author, "Suppose the Jews had not prevailed on the Romans to crucify Christ, what would have become of the atonement? The holy race supplied the victim and the immolators. What other race could have been entrusted with such a consummation? Persecute us! if you believe what you profess you should kneel to us. You raise statues to the hero that saves a country.

We have saved the human race and you persecute us for doing it ! ”

Elsewhere Disraeli eloquently dwells upon the magnificent influence of Hebrew literature. “ The most popular poet of England is and has been David, the sweet singer of Israel. There never has been a race that sang so often the odes of David, and its best achievements have been performed under their inspiration. It was the “ sword of the Lord and of Gideon ” that won the boasted liberties of England in Cromwell’s days ; chanting the same canticles that cheered the heart of Judah among the glens, the Scotch upon their hill-sides achieved their religious freedom.” Staying their souls upon the same brace, he might have continued, the Pilgrim Fathers lifted into place the foundation pillars of America. There are no bounds to the exultation of the patriotic enthusiast. Men of other lands have been deified, he says,—Alexander the Greek, Cæsar the Roman—but only in the case of Jesus, the Hebrew, has the apotheosis endured.

For pride of race what can surpass such utterances ! “ Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined ” ; “ The seed of Jacob the chosen people ; ” God himself stooping from heaven to command the Egyptian, “ Let my people go ! ” What an echo do these soaring claims of the old biblical writers find far down the ages from the nineteenth century ! one and the same exultant utterance from ancient David, who before the ark of the Lord wore the diadem of Hebrew sovereignty, and from him who in the supreme places of the world just now wore the coronet of an English earl !



CHAPTER XIX.

A SWEET SINGER IN ISRAEL.*

HAS the spirit of this race, so intense, so persistent, so trampled by persecution, ever found in modern times an adequate voice in poetry? Yes; a voice which is pervaded with all the melancholy that such long-continued suffering would cause, in which we seem to hear sometimes the saddest wailing; then again a terrible wit, sometimes indeed lightly playful, but more often resembling the laughter of a man mad through despair; in which, too, there is at times a gall and bitterness as of the waters of Marah, poured out too indiscriminately upon the innocent, as upon those worthy of scorn,—the voice of Heinrich Heine.

He was born of Jewish parents at Düsseldorf on the Rhine. "How old are you?" says a personage to him in one of his works. "Signora, I was born on New Year's Day, 1800." "'I have always told you,' said the marquise, 'that he was one of the first men of the century.'" The Heine family came from Bückeberg, a little principality whose insignificance Heine merrily hits off. Alluding to a saying of Danton, in the French Revolution, who, when he

* Adapted from the writer's "Short Hist. of Germ. Lit."

was urged to leave his country to save his life, exclaimed: "What! can a man carry his fatherland on the soles of his feet!" he says:

"O Danton, thou must for thine error atone;
Thou art not one of the true souls;
For a man *can* carry his fatherland
About with him on his shoe-soles.
Of Bückeburg's principality
Full half on my boots I carried.
Such muddy roads I've never beheld;
Since here in the world I've tarried."

When Heine was nineteen he was sent to Frankfort to learn business. Waterloo had come four years before, and in the restored order the Jews were thrust back into their old condition from which Napoleon had freed them. As one passes through the Juden-gasse in Frankfort, it is perhaps the most interesting reminiscence that can be recalled, that there, in the noisome lanes, moved the figure of the young poet, hearing with his fellows, at the stroke of the hour, the bolting of the harsh gates. Soon after we find him in Hamburg, where his uncle, Solomon Heine, was the money-prince of North Germany, and a man famous for his benefactions in all directions. Convinced at length that a business career would never be to his taste, he was for a time at the University of Göttingen, then in Berlin, where he became intimate with Varnhagen von Ense and his Hebrew wife Rahel, people of elegant culture and brilliant gifts; whose *salon* fills almost the place in the literary history of the northern capital that is filled by the Hotel Rambouillet in

France. His gifts grew ripe in this literary atmosphere, and he presently entered upon his poetic career. He hoped at this time for a government position or a university professorship, for either of which the abjuration of the faith of his ancestors was necessary. This was resolved upon, and he was baptized into the Lutheran Church. The change was made purely from motives of expediency; he had no faith in the doctrines of the Church into which he was received; in his attachment to his race he remained a genuine Jew. For years after, Heine's mind was ill-at-ease for this apostasy. "I will be a Japanese," he writes. "They hate nothing so much as the cross. I will be a Japanese." The advantage he sought he did not secure; his position, on the other hand, becoming more uncomfortable than before. In this period of his life Heine strikes into that mocking vein of writing which he preserved so constantly afterward, both in his prose and his poetry. Leaving Göttingen for a journey in the Harz, after having contracted a spite against the society of the town, he laughed mercilessly at his old associates.

"I have especial fault to find that the conception has not been sufficiently refuted that the ladies of Göttingen have large feet. I have busied myself from year's end to year's end with the earnest confutation of this opinion, and in the profound treatise which shall contain the results of these studies, I speak, 1, of feet generally; 2, of the feet of the ancients; 3, of the feet of elephants; 4, of the feet of the ladies of Göttingen; then if I can get



HEINRICH HEINE.

paper big enough, I will add thereto some copper-plate engravings, with portraits, life-size, of the ladies' feet of Göttingen." Again, to hit off the pedantry of the town, he says: "In front of the Weender gate two little school-boys met me, one of whom said to the other: 'I will not walk with Theodor any more; he is a low fellow, for yesterday he did not know the genitive of *mensa*.'"

He soon arrived at fame. A multitude of readers followed his pen with delight. His songs were everywhere sung; his witty and graphic prose commended itself no less. His nonchalant irreverence, which not infrequently runs into insolence and blasphemy, his disregard of proprieties, his outspoken scorn of the powers that ruled, brought down upon him, not unnaturally, fierce persecution. He travelled in various directions, not only in Germany, but visiting Italy, France, and England, his sparkling record keeping pace with his steps. At length, outlawed in Germany, he made his home in Paris. He was constantly writing, did much as a critic of art and literature, much in the field of politics. His poems are numberless; sometimes simple and sweet throughout as an outgush from the heart of the most innocent of children; sometimes with an uncanny or diabolic suggestion thrown in at the end, as the red mouse at length runs out of the mouth of the beauty with whom Faust dances on the Brocken in the Walpurgis-nacht; sometimes, again, full of a very vitriol of acrid denunciation.

The story of Heine's last years is one of almost unparalleled sadness. He was attacked with a soften-

ing of the spinal marrow ; it stretched him upon his bed where he lingered eight years, enduring great agony. He wore out the weary time on his "mattress-grave," as he called it, nursed by his wife, an ignorant but good-hearted grisette. The terrible chastening brought no change to his spirit. It is a dark life almost everywhere ; but as he lay stretched upon his mattress-grave, there was a bitterness in his mocking, an audacity in his blasphemies, which the wildest declarations of his preceding years had not possessed. No moanings from an Æolian harp were ever sweeter than the utterances which occasionally came as the tempestuous agony swept down upon him. We see, too, a better side in his will : " I die in the belief of one only God, the eternal creator of the world, whose pity I implore for my immortal soul. I lament that I have sometimes spoken of sacred things without due reverence, but I was carried away more by the spirit of my time than by my own inclinations. I pray both God and man for pardon." At length came Feb. 16, 1856. A friend bending over him asked him if he were on good terms with God. " Let your mind rest," said Heine. " God will pardon me ; that 's what he 's for." And so with a devil-may-care mock upon his lips, the child of the Jew, in whom the spirit of the race, cruelly beset through so many slow-moving centuries, at length found utterance for its sorrow, its yearnings, its implacable spite, went forth to his account.

That Heine was the most unaccountable of men will hardly need further illustration. In one breath he writes " The Pilgrimage to Kevlaar," a poem

which one would say must have come from the heart of an artless, ignorant peasant, full of unquestioning Catholic piety ; in another, it is the grotesque satire *Atta Troll*, in which the Catholic conception of heaven is burlesqued with unshrinking, Mephistophelean audacity.

The difficulties of rendering in Heine's case are perhaps quite insurmountable. Nothing was ever so airy and volatile as his wit, nothing ever so delicate as his sentiment. In the process of translation the aroma half exhales. What, as Heine has distilled it, is most searchingly pungent, becomes insipid in a foreign phrase ; what causes tears, as it flows on in the German rhythm in pathetic, child-like artlessness, in English words sinks to commonplace. Let us, however, attempt it. There has not lived in our time such a master of brilliant, graphic description. Here are passages from his child-life at Düsseldorf, quoted from the "*Book Le Grand*." The book is named from an old drummer who fills the child with Napoleonic inspirations.

"As I woke the sun appeared, as usual, through the windows, and a drum was beating below ; and as I stepped into our parlor and bade my father, who still sat in the white gown in which the barber had been powdering him, good-morning, I heard the light-footed hair-dresser tell, while he was plying the curling-tongs, that that day, at the Town Hall, homage was to be rendered to the new Grand Duke, Joachim Murat. As he spoke, drums were beating once more ; and I stepped to the house-door and saw in full march the French troops, the light-

hearted sons of glory, who went singing and clinking through the world, the grave and gay grenadier guards, the tall bear-skin caps, the tricolored cockades, the glancing bayonets, the voltigeurs full of jollity and *point d'honneur*, and the great silver-sticked drum-major, who could reach with his stick up to the first story, and with his eyes up to the second, where the pretty girls sat at the windows."

At length Napoleon appears. "The emperor wore his unpretending green uniform, and the little world-historic hat. He rode a white pony; negligent, almost hanging, he sat, one hand holding high the reins, the other patting good-naturedly the pony's neck. His face had that color which we see in marble heads of Greek and Roman sculpture; its features were nobly impressed, like those of antiques; and on this countenance it stood written: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' A smile—which warmed and quieted every heart hovered about the lips; and yet we know that those lips had only to whistle, and Prussia would no longer exist; those lips needed only to whistle, and all the clergy would be rung out; those lips needed only to whistle, and the whole Holy Roman Empire would dance; and those lips smiled, and the eye, too, smiled. It was an eye clear as the heavens; it could read in the heart of man; it saw with sudden quickness all the things of this world, while the rest of us only looked at one another and over colored shadows. The brow was not so clear; the ghosts of future battles haunted it; sometimes it moved convulsively, and those were the creating thoughts—the great seven-

mile-boots thoughts—with which the emperor's spirit invisibly strode over the world. The emperor rode quietly through the avenue; behind him, proud on snorting horses, and loaded with gold and ornaments, rode his suite; the drums rolled, the trumpets sounded and the people cried with a thousand voices: 'Vive l'empereur!'"

The Germans have been accused of wanting greatly in wit and humor,* but certain it is that this German Jew, more than any man probably of the present century in the civilized world possessed these gifts; we must regard him as a genius coördinate with Aristophanes, Cervantes, and Montaigne. His conversation was full of wit, even when he lay in the greatest misery on his "mattress-grave." He was asked if he had read one of the shorter pieces of a certain dull writer. "No," said he, "I never read any but the great works of our friend. I like best his three-, four-, or five-volume books. Water on a large scale—a lake, a sea, an ocean—is a fine thing; but I can't endure water in a spoon."

Once at a time of great distress, the physician who was examining his chest, asked: "Pouvez-vous siffler?" "Hélas, non!" was the reply. "Pas même les pièces de M. Scribe."

In many of his poems he rattles on in the merriest, most nonchalant carelessness, shooting out, now and then, the sharpest darts of spite. Poor Germany was forever his butt, as in the following:

From Cologne, at quarter to eight in the morn,
My journey's course I followed;

* J. R. Lowell: Essay on Lessing.

Toward three of the clock to Hagen we came,
And there our dinner we swallowed.

The table was spread, and here I found
The real old German cooking.
I greet thee, dear old "sauer-kraut,"
With thy delicate perfume smoking !

Mother's stuffed chestnuts in cabbage green !
They set my heart in a flutter.
Codfish of my country, I greet ye fine
As ye cunningly swim in your butter !

How the sausage revelled in sputtering fat !
And field-fares, small angels pious,
All roasted and swaddled in apple-sauce,
Twittered out to me, "Only try us !"

"Welcome, countryman," twittered they,
"To us at length reverting.
How long, alas ! in foreign parts,
With poultry strange you 've been flirting !"

A goose, a quiet and genial soul,
Was on the table extended.
Perhaps she loved me once, in the days
Before our youth was ended.

She threw at me such a meaning look !
So trustful, tender, and pensive,
Her soul was beautiful—but her meat !—
Was tough I 'm apprehensive.

On a pewter-plate a pig's head they brought ;
And you know, in the German nation,
It's the snouts of the pigs that they always crown
With a laurel decoration.*

* Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen.

What power of scornful utterance Heine possessed, the potentates of Germany, who persecuted him, felt to the uttermost—none more than Friedrich Wilhelm IV., of Prussia, and Ludwig II., of Bavaria. Both were monarchs possessed of intellectual gifts and with some good purposes. Each, however, was in his own way weak and sensual. Stupidly brutal were the heels that sought to crush Heine; but like a snake, writhing and rearing its crest, he strikes with fangs so full of diabolical venom, that we are almost forced to pity the oppressor.

The brilliant wit and poet must be judged with severity, however beneficial the scourging which he administered may sometimes have been. His wit was often distorted to cynicism, his frivolity to insolence and vulgarity. It is hard to believe he was in earnest about any thing. In multitudes of passages, both prose and poetry, he suddenly interrupts the expression of intense emotion by a grotesque suggestion which makes the emotion or its object ridiculous. For Napoleon one would imagine that he felt the most genuine and earnest enthusiasm of his life. There is a certain passage in the "Book Le Grand" full of power, in which he denounces England for her treatment of the emperor at St. Helena; yet as if an actor, after giving the curse in Lear, should suddenly thrust his tongue into his cheek and draw his face into a grimace, Heine ends his denunciation with a laughable turn, in which he gratifies his petty spite at his old university. "Strange! a terrible fate has already overtaken the three principal opponents of the emperor: Lord Castlereagh has cut

his throat, Louis XVIII. has rotted on his throne, and Prof. Saalfeld is still always professor at Göttingen !”

Among English writers, Heine has points of resemblance to Sterne, still more to Byron ; but to my mind his closest English analogue in genius and character is Dean Swift. In Swift's career, it is perhaps the pleasantest incident that he could attract the love of Stella and Vanessa, and feel for them a friendship which perhaps amounted to love. In Heine's honorable affection for two women, his wife “Nonotte” and his mother, the “old lady of the Damm Thor,” we see him at his best. Heine and Swift were place-hunters, who sought for advancement in questionable ways, only to be disappointed ; for both there was disease at the end that was worse than death. Such gall and wormwood as they could pour upon their adversaries, what sinners elsewhere have tasted ! With what whips of scorpions they smote folly and vice, but who will dare to say it was through any love of virtue ? Both libelled useful and honorable men with coarse lampoons ; in both there was too frequent sinking into indecency.

But there was a field in which the bitter dean had no part with the sufferer of the “mattress-grave.” Heine was not altogether a scoffer ; his power of touching the tenderest sensibilities is simply wonderful. In his plaintive songs the influence of Romanticism can be clearly seen, and also of the popular ballad, whose character he caught most felicitously. He assumed a certain negligence, which gave his

poems an air of pure naturalness and immediateness, whereas they were the products of consummate art.* But no poet has ever been able to convey so thoroughly the impression of perfect artlessness. The "Princess Ilse," for instance, one would say could have been written by no other than the most innocent of children.

ILSE.

I am the Princess Ilse, .
To my castle come with me,—
To the Ilsenstein, my dwelling,
And we will happy be.

Thy forehead will I moisten
From my clear-flowing rill,
Thy griefs thou shalt leave behind thee,
Thou soul with sorrow so ill !

Upon my bosom snowy,
Within my white arms fold,
There shalt thou lie and dream a dream
Of the fairy lore of old.

I 'll kiss thee, and softly cherish,
As once I cherished and kissed
The dear, dear Kaiser Heinrich,
So long ago at rest.

The dead are dead forever ;
The living alone live still ;
And I am blooming and beautiful ;
My heart doth laugh and thrill.

O come down into my castle,
My castle crystal bright !
There dance the knights and the maidens ;
There revels each servant wight.

* Kurz: "Geschichte der deutschen Literatur."

There rustle the garments silken,—
There rattles the spear below.
The dwarfs drum and trumpet and fiddle,
And the bugle merrily blow.

Yet my arm shall softly enclose thee,
As it Kaiser Heinrich enclosed ;
When the trumpets' music thundered,
His ears with my hands I closed.

It is very pleasant, too, to read these lines to his wife, written on his death-bed :

I was, O lamb, as shepherd placed,
To guard thee in this earthly waste.
To thee I did refreshment bring ;
To thee brought water from the spring.
When cold the winter storm alarmed
I have thee in my bosom warmed.
I held thee folded, close embracing,
When torrent rains were rudely chasing,
And woodland brook and hungry wolf
Howled, rivals, in the darksome gulf.
Thou didst not fear—thou hast not quivered,
Even when the bolt of thunder shivered
The tallest pine ; upon my breast,
In peace and calm thou lay'st at rest.

My arm grows weak. Lo, creeping there
Comes pallid Death ! My shepherd care,
My herdsman's office, now I leave.
Back to thy hands, O God, I give
My staff ; and now I pray thee guard
This lamb of mine, when 'neath the sward
I lie ; and suffer not, I pray,
That thorns should pierce her on the way.
From nettles harsh protect her fleece ;
From soiling marshes give release ;
And everywhere, her feet before,

With sweet grass spread the meadows o'er ;
And let her sleep from care as blest
As once she slept upon my breast.

Once at a critical time in our country's history, it happened to me to visit a negro school. We went from room to room among the dusky faces, until at last one said : " Let us have them sing." Presently the voices rose and fell in a marvellous song. Out of the windows the heavens hung sombre about us ; the dark faces were before us, the children of the race whose presence among us has brought to them, in each generation, tragedy so pathetic,—the race that has brought to us so innocently such subject for controversy, such occasion for bloodshed, and on account of which we still sometimes seem to hear such fateful thunder-mutterings of approaching disaster. The news of the morning had predisposed us to gloom ; the associations now conspired to deepen it ; the strange melody which came pouring forth seemed, somehow, singularly in keeping. There was in my spirit no defined feeling, but a vague unrest, at once a foreboding of calamity and yearning after peace. It was precisely the sentiment of the song. The singers seemed to feel it ; we who listened felt it, and there were eyes whose lids trembled with the coming tears. It was the " Lorelei " of Heine :

" I cannot tell what it forebodeth,
That I am so sad to-day."

The words so simple—so infantile almost in sense, and yet with which is marvellously bound such tender feeling ! As one repeats the lines, they are al-

most nothing; yet caught within them, like some sad sweet-throated nightingale within a net, there pants such a pathos! What could have been farther away! What cared we then for the Rhine, and the sorceress who sings upon its banks, and the boatman engulfed in the whirlpool! What knew or cared the singers! But something indescribable came pulsing forth to us from out of the words, and I felt that somehow it was the appropriate utterance for the mood in which we found ourselves—the thing to hear from the dark-faced youths before us,—an undefined sorrow,—a foreshadowing of danger all unknown and vague! Mighty the poet, I thought, whose verse can come home with such power in lands and among races so far away!

The child of the Jew he was—of the race among the races of the earth possessed of the most intense passionate force—and in him his people found a voice. Now it is a sound of wailing, melancholy and sweet as that heard by the rivers of Babylon, when the harps were hung upon the willows; now a Hebrew aspiration, lofty as the peal of the silver trumpets before the Holy of Holies in the Temple service, when the gems in the high-priest's breast-plate flashed with the descending deity; now a call to strive for freedom, bold and clear as the summons of the Maccabees. But think of the cup that has been pressed to the Jew's lips for almost two thousand years! The bitterness has passed into his soul, and utters itself in scorn and poisoned mocking. He cares not what sanctities he insults, nor whether the scoff touches the innocent as well as the guilty. Perse-

cution has brought to pass desperation, which utters itself at length in infernal laughter.

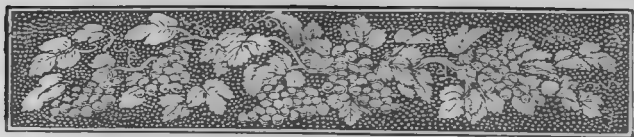
A touching story is told of Heine's last walk in the Boulevard, from which he went home to the death in life he was doomed to undergo for many years. It was in May, 1848, a day of revolution. "Masses of people rolled along the streets of Paris, driven about by their tribunes as by storms. The poet, half-blind, half-lame, dragged himself on his stick, tried to extricate himself from the deafening uproar, and fled into the Louvre close by. He stepped into the rooms of the palace, in that troubled time nearly empty, and found himself on the ground-floor, in the room in which the ancient gods and goddesses stand. Suddenly he stood before the ideal of beauty, the smiling, entrancing goddess, the miracle of an unknown master—the Venus of Milo. Overcome, agitated, stricken through, almost terrified at her aspect, the sick man staggered back till he sank on a seat, and tears, hot and bitter, streamed down his cheeks. The beautiful lips of the goddess, which appear to breathe, smiled with her wonted smile at her unhappy victim."* Heine says himself in a letter :

"Only with pain could I drag myself to the Louvre, and I was nearly exhausted when I entered the lofty hall where the blessed goddess of beauty, our dear lady of Milo, stands on her pedestal. At her feet I lay a long time, and I wept so passionately that a stone must have had compassion on me. Therefore the goddess looked down pityingly upon

* Meissner.

me, yet at the same time inconsolably, as though she would say: 'See you not that I have no arms, and that therefore I can give you no help?' "

Of the spots associated with Heine, there is none so interesting as that room in the Louvre. I stood there on a day when disturbance again raged in the streets of Paris. It was the end of August, 1870. In Alsace and Lorraine the armies of France had just been crushed; in the next week was to come Sedan. The streets were full of the tumult of war, the foot-beat of passing regiments, the clatter of drill, the Marseillaise. On the Seine, just before, a band of *ouvriers* had threatened to throw us into the river as Prussian spies. In the confusion, the shrine of the serene goddess was left vacant, as at that former time. I found it a hushed asylum, the fairest of statues, rising from its pedestal, wearing upon its lips its eternal smile. The rounded outlines swelled into their curves of perfect beauty; within the eyes lay the divine calm; on the neck a symmetry more than mortal;—all this, and, at the same time, the mutilation, the broken folds of the drapery, the dints made in the marble by barbarian blows, the absent arms. When one stands before the Venus of Milo, it is not unworthy of even so high a moment to call up the image of that suffering man of great genius, shamed from his sneer, and restored to his best self in the supernal presence. May we not see in the statue a type of Heine's genius, so shorn of strength, so stained and broken, yet in the ruin of beauty and power so unparalleled!



CHAPTER XX.

SOME HARMONIOUS LIVES.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY shall be our type of the Hebrew artist ; but since he was scarcely less interesting in his character than he was as a musician, and since the household of which he was a member were in great part as fair in their lives, and almost as gifted in their genius as he, we must not take him as an isolated figure, but look at him in his relations. In this way we shall best understand the beauty of his spirit, while some idea is formed of the kindred, some of whom scarcely less than he, deserve to be celebrated.

The family of Moses Mendelssohn, the little children who walked with their father through the streets of Berlin, and could not understand why the Christian boys hooted at them and called them names, became men and women remarkable in themselves, and noteworthy also as the parents, in their turn, of children who have led, in times near our own, famous and charming lives. The noble thinker was, with all his liberal spirit, as we have seen, nevertheless, thoroughly a Jew, answering the over-zealous Lavater, with true Hebrew haughtiness, when he felt that the sanctities of his hereditary faith were

too rudely touched, In minor matters of discipline he was faithful to the ancient standards, maintaining, for instance, in his family the rigid patriarchal rule which did not relax, even though the child grew gray, until the father died.

Of the three sons and three daughters of Moses Mendelssohn, Dorothea was probably in her time the most distinguished, a woman of brilliant mind and admirable qualities, whose career in spite of great eccentricities, deserves a glance from us. She was the least exemplary of the children; her irregularities, however, were due to her strange surroundings, and do not cancel her substantial worth.

According to Hebrew fashion, the sons of a family had small liberty in the choice of wives, and the daughters none at all in the choice of husbands. Moses Mendelssohn married Dorothea, with no consultation of her wishes, to the Berlin trader, Veit, a man worthy but thoroughly uncongenial to the bright-minded girl. After some years of union, during which she bore to him children, she forsook her husband to form an irregular connection, similar to that between George Eliot and G. H. Lewes, with the distinguished Friedrich Schlegel. Strangely enough honest Veit remained thoroughly friendly, acquiescing in the separation, in fact, with an equanimity which seems to imply that the discomfort had not been entirely on the side of the wife. Schlegel soon rose to brilliant fame, with which Dorothea, whose literary gifts were remarkable, was closely connected. Schlegel's story "Lucinde" a memorable utterance of "Romanticism," of which literary tendency he

was the founder and best type, was an outgrowth of this left-handed relation, a book not edifying, but curious as an expression from a strange world, now passed away. Schlegel and Dorothea at last were married. The latter became a Christian, and, with her husband, a Catholic. Removing to Vienna they were at last distinguished personages at the court of Austria, where the political course of Schlegel became as reactionary as his course in religion; for he used his fine powers to uphold against all revolutionary tendencies the threatened House of Hapsburg.

Another of the daughters of Moses Mendelssohn, a bright and amiable woman, also became a devout Catholic. The sons possessed characters of better balance than the daughters. They advanced from the position of their father as far as he himself had gone beyond the ancient landmarks. Joseph, the elder, became a prosperous banker, but maintained a great interest in intellectual pursuits, having especial note as an important friend and helper of Alexander von Humboldt. Abraham, however, the second son, is, of all the children of Moses, the most attractive, a sweet enlightened soul, as devoid of extravagance as of narrowness,—a most engaging figure in himself, and the parent of children whose memory the world will not willingly let die. The great composer, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, was his second child. The modest father deemed himself inconspicuous and unimportant between the illustrious names that preceded and followed him. "Formerly, I was the son of my father," he used to

say, "but now I am the father of my son." But he was really in himself a vigorous and independent character. With his wife, Leah Salomon, a Berlin Jewess, he was suitably mated. Her portrait, in the book of her grandson, Sebastian Hensel, which is the authority upon which this sketch of the Mendelssohn family is based, shows a face in which power and amiability are blended, the eyes in particular looking forth with a light that suggests genius.

Of the four children, Fanny, the elder, as well as Felix, early showed remarkable musical genius. Rebecca, the third, perhaps surpassed the others in intellectual power, though inferior to Fanny and Felix as regards their special gift. Though Abraham and Leah themselves preferred, until late in life, to remain Jews, they resolved that their children should be brought up as Christians, and here we reach a point which some will find it hard to approve. How can parents, without insincerity or culpable indifference, while retaining one faith, cause their children to be educated in another? What justification is possible can best be given in the words of Abraham Mendelssohn himself; whether it is sufficient the reader must judge. The perusal of the explanation, however, will satisfy all that the father was delicately conscientious, and that he himself had no scruples. In reaching his conclusion, he was much influenced by a brother of Leah, who had himself become a Christian, whose expressions all will admit to be wise and broad. Wrote the brother-in-law, when Abraham at first felt that the children must be brought up as Jews:

"You say you owe it to the memory of your father. * * * You may remain faithful to an oppressed, persecuted religion—you may leave it to your children as a prospect of life-long martyrdom, as long as you believe it to be absolute truth; but when you have ceased to believe that, it is barbarism." Abraham had ceased to believe that. He wrote to Fanny, at the time of her confirmation, a letter that might have been penned by Nathan the Wise:

"Does God exist? What is God? Is He part of ourselves, and does He continue to live after the other part has ceased to be? And where and how? All this I do not know, and, therefore, I have never taught you any thing about it. But I know that there exists in me and in you and in all human beings an everlasting inclination towards all that is good, true, and right, and a conscience which warns and guides us when we go astray. I know it, I believe it; I live in this faith, and this is my religion. Everybody has it who does not intentionally and knowingly cast it away. * * * When you look at your mother, and turn over in your thoughts all the immeasurable good she has lavished upon you by her constant, self-sacrificing devotion as long as you live, and when that reflection makes your heart and eyes overflow with gratitude, love, and veneration, then you feel God and are godly. * * * The outward form of religion your teacher has given you is historical and changeable, like all human ordinances. Some thousands of years ago, the Jewish form was the reigning one, then the heathen

form, and now it is the Christian. Your mother and I were brought up by our parents as Jews, and without being obliged to change the form of our religion, have been able to follow the divine instinct in us and in our conscience. We have educated you and your brothers and sisters in the Christian faith, because it is the creed of most civilized people, and contains nothing that can lead you away from what is good, and much that guides you to love, obedience, tolerance, and resignation, even if it offered nothing but the example of its founder, understood by so few and followed by still fewer."

Felix could sing and compose almost before he could talk; he was a skilful pianist at six, and gave a public concert at nine. Compositions published when he was fifteen are regarded as classical. Before he had passed beyond boyhood he had become famous through the beautiful overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream." Fanny was equally precocious. At thirteen she gave a proof of an uncommon musical memory, by playing without notes twenty-four preludes of Bach, as a surprise for her father, and had not passed beyond her girlhood before she had produced lovely music of her own. In her early womanhood she won the love of a young artist destined to fame, Wilhelm Hensel, whom she at length married after an interval of some years, spent by the painter in Italy. The good sense and brightness of the faithful mother, Leah, are well shown in the following letter to the young lover, in which, with the authority of a true Hebrew mother, she shields her daughter:

“ Seriously, my dear Mr. Hensel, you must not be angry with me, because I cannot allow a correspondence between you and Fanny. Put yourself, in fairness for one moment in the place of a mother, and exchange your interests for mine, and my refusal will appear to you natural, just, and sensible ; whereas you are probably now violently denouncing my proceeding as most barbaric. For the same reason that makes me forbid an engagement, I must declare myself averse to any correspondence. You know that I truly esteem you, that I have, indeed, a real affection for you, and entertain no objection to you personally. The reasons why I have not yet decided in your favor, are the difference of age and the uncertainty of your position. A man may not think of marrying before his prospects in life are, to a certain degree, assured. At any rate, he must not blame the girl’s parents, who, having experience, sense, and cool blood, are destined by nature to judge for him and for her. An artist, as long as he is single, is a happy being ; all circles open to him, court favor animates him ; the small cares of life vanish before him ; he steps lightly over the rocks which difference of rank has piled up in the world ; he works at what he likes, the most delighted, happy being in the whole creation. As soon as domestic cares take hold of him, all this magic disappears, the lovely coloring fades, he must work to sustain his family. Indeed, I made it a point in my children’s education to give them simple and unpretending habits, so that they might not be obliged to look out for rich marriages ; but in the eyes of parents a competency, a

moderate but fixed income, are necessary conditions for a happy life; and although my husband can afford to give to each of his children a handsome portion, he is not rich enough to secure the future prosperity of them all. You are at the commencement of your career, and under beautiful auspices; endeavor to realize them, and rest assured that we will not be against you when, at the end of your studies, you can satisfy us about your position. Fanny is very young, and, Heaven be praised, has hitherto had no concern and no passion. I will not have you, by love-letters, transport her for years into a state of consuming passion and a yearning frame of mind quite strange to her character, when I have her before me now blooming, healthy, happy, and free."

In the letters which have been quoted, father and mother have been sufficiently reflected, and now we must look at the home. "The rooms were stately, large, and lofty, built with delightful spaciousness. One room, especially, overlooking the court, and opening by means of three arches into an adjoining apartment, was beautiful and most suitable for theatrical representations. For many, many years, at Christmas, and on birthdays and festive occasions, this was the scene of interesting performances. Generally it was Leah's sitting-room. The windows opened upon a spacious court, closed by a one-storied garden-house, over which looked the tops of ancient trees. In summer the garden-house, in which Fanny and Hensel lived after their marriage, was perfectly charming. The windows were embowered

in vines, and all opened on to the garden, with its blooming lilacs and avenues of stately old trees. The large court and high front building kept off every sound; you lived as in the deepest loneliness of a forest,—opposite, the magnificent trees, with merrily twittering birds, no lodger above or below, after the noise of the streets the quietest seclusion, and at your windows green leaves. The centre part of the house, and its most invaluable and beautiful portion, consisted in a very spacious hall, too large to be called a drawing-room. There was space in it for several hundred people, and it had on the garden side a movable glass wall, interrupted by pillars, so that the hall could be changed into an open portico. The hall commanded a view of a park, which, in Frederick the Great's time, had been part of the *Thier-garten*, and was therefore rich in most superb old trees. In this house and garden arose a singularly engaging, poetic life. * * * The Mendelssohn children loved Shakespeare, especially the 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' By a singular coincidence, in that very year, 1826, in their lovely garden, favored by most beautiful weather, they themselves led a fantastic, dream-like life. For them and their friends, the summer months were like one uninterrupted festival day, full of poetry, music, merry games, ingenious practical jokes, disguises, and representations. The whole life had a higher and loftier tendency, a more idyllic coloring, more poetry, than is often met with. Nature and art, wit, heart, and mind, the high flow of Felix's genius,—all this gave coloring to their doings, and on the other hand this

wonderful life gave a new impulse to his creative spirit. The most brilliant result of that strangely poetic frame of mind is the overture to the 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' "

Any thing more ideal than this charming life, it is scarcely possible to conceive. The Mendelssohns, one would say, had found for themselves a paradise without the serpent. An abundant basis of wealth, the father and mother so wise, and of spirit so pleasant, the children maturing in beautiful promise,—no shadow of disease, sorrow, or anxiety. Felix was already famous, for the overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream" caused the world to think that a successor to Beethoven was born; Fanny, his equal in gifts and talents, but remaining modestly within the bounds which custom had set for women; Rebecca, in her way not less remarkable and attractive than the elder brother and sister; and Paul, the younger son, a thoroughly good and clever youth, if less highly endowed than the rest. The circle of friends about them, whom they visited, or who came to their sun-bright home, were present at the sports and representations at Christmas, and who sat looking out upon the beautiful garden while the wonderful children from their instruments conquered the nightingales, as they now rendered the works of the old composers, now improvised, now gave their own compositions, which have come to be esteemed as the most precious things in music,—this circle of friends comprehended the best and brightest men of the time in art, philosophy, science, and literature,—Goethe, Hegel, Humboldt, Heinrich Heine, Encke the astronomer,

Paganini, Moscheles, Spontini, Schadow, and Devrient. No more serious ripple disturbed the even flow of the life than some such little incident as follows, narrated by Fanny. Alexander von Humboldt had arranged an observatory in the garden, on account of the silence and quiet of the place, where he and Professor Encke often met by night, as well as by day.

"I hear somebody entering our bedroom, and passing out again at the other side. I call. No answer. Wilhelm awakes, and cries out, 'Who *im Teufelsnamen* is there?' Enter, with majestic step, Louise (Hensel's sister), saying that she heard thieves rummaging about in the hall, and then going into the garden with a lantern. She had thought it her duty to wake somebody, but had only wanted to call the servant, and was very sorry for having disturbed us. Wilhelm gets up, wraps himself in a red blanket, and goes into the hall with a drawn sword, Louise in her dressing-gown and night-cap showing him a light. He opens the door just in time, for the thief with his lantern is on the point of escaping toward the garden. When he hears the noise he looks around, and seeing a red spectre with a drawn sword, runs away, Wilhelm after him. The thief makes straight for the gardener's lodge. When they both are in the gardener's room, pursuer and pursued burst into a peal of laughter. 'Professor Hensel!' 'Professor Encke! I beg you a thousand pardons, but I took you for a burglar!'"

From this home Felix went forth to become in his sphere a conqueror, the favorite of princes, and at



FELIX MENDELSSOHN.

the same time of peasants, the recipient of homage the most enthusiastic and intoxicating, in all the lands of Europe, an outpouring which he seems to have undergone without injury to his character, for to the end of his too short life he remained simple, affectionate, and dignified. The music that he wrote, like the lyrical poetry of Goethe, reflected accurately the mood for the time being of the spirit from which it proceeded. The "Scottish Symphony" and the "Isles of Fingal" suggest the wild beauty of the Highlands and Hebrides, the far North, upon whose soil they were elaborated. The reading of "Faust" brought forth the "Walpurgis Nacht," the study of Greek, the music for the "Antigone" and the "Œdipus." He found the best appreciation in England, chiefly for his sacred music, and this appreciation, reacting upon him, perhaps brought it to pass that his works in this field are his masterpieces. His great oratorios, "St. Paul" and "Elijah," must be regarded, it is said, as "the main pillars of his fame." *

It is indeed marvellous how complete a dominion Mendelssohn exercised over those who came under his spell. He was short and slight, and in his features strongly Jewish. The countenance was very mobile, the brow full, the eyes possessed of a power of expression quite extraordinary. When he was extemporizing they seemed to dilate to twice their natural size, the brown pupil becoming a vivid black. His slender hands upon the key-board of piano or organ became like living and intelligent creatures. His form bent over the instrument, heaving and

* Grove: Musical Dictionary.

swaying with the emotion which was born amid the tones. When with slender wand, at the performance of the "St. Paul" or "Elijah," he stood among the great multitude of singers and instruments, all turned to the magician with one soul, and the listening thousands beyond trembled to the music in sympathy not less intense. To illustrate this magical power, the account of a musical enthusiast, the authoress of "Charles Auchester," may here be well transcribed. Mendelssohn, described under the name of Seraphael, conducts a performance of sacred music in Westminster Abbey.

"Entering the centre of the nave, we caught sight of the transept, already crowded with hungering, thirsting faces. The vision of the choir itself, as it is still preserved to me, is as a picture of Heaven to infancy. What more like one's idea of Heaven than that height, the arches whose sun-kissed summits glowed in the distance, whose vista stretched from the light of rainbows at one end to the organ at the other, music's archetype? Below the organ stood Seraphael's desk, as yet unhaunted,—the orchestra, the chorus beneath the lofty front. Seraphael entered so quietly as to take us by surprise.

"Down the nave the welcome rolled, across the transept it overflowed the echoes; for a few moments nothing else could be felt, but there was, as it were, a tender shadow upon the very reverberating jubilation, subdued for the sake of one whose beauty lifted over us, appeared hovering, descending from some late-left heaven, ready to depart again, but not without a sign for which we waited. Immediately,

and while he yet stood with his eyes of power upon the whole front of faces, the solo singers entered also and took their seats all calmly. We held our breath for the coming of the overture.

"It opened like the first dawn of lightening, but scarce yet lightened morning,—its vast subject introduced with strings alone, in that joyous key which so often served him. But soon the first trombone blazed out, the second and third responding with their stupendous tones, as the amplifications of fugue involved and spread themselves more and more. Then, like glory filling up and flooding the height of Heaven, broke in the organ, and brimmed the brain with the calm of an utter and forceful expression, realized by tone. In sympathy with each instrument, it was alike with none. The vibrating harmonies, pulse-like, clung to our pulses, then drew out each heart, deep-beating and undistracted, to adore at the throne above, from which all beauty springs. Holiness, precious as the old Hebrew psalm of all that hath life and breath, exhaled from every modulation; each dropped the freshness of everlasting spring.

"I cannot describe the hush that hung above and seemed to spiritualize the listeners; nor how, as chorus after chorus rang, our spirits sank upon the strains and songs. Faint supplications, deep acclaims of joy, all surcharged the spirit with the mysterious tenderness of the uncreate and unpronounceable Name. When at length those two hours, concentrating such an eternity in their perfection of all sensation, had reached their climax,—or, rather, when,

in the final chorus, imprisoned harmonies burst down from stormy-hearted organ, from strings all shivering alike, from blasting, rending tubes,—it was as if the multitude had sunk upon their knees, so profound was the passion-cradling calm. The blue-golden lustre, dim and tremulous, still crowned the unwavering arches. So many tears are not often shed as fell in that time.

"During the last reverberations of that unimaginable Alleluiah, I had not looked up at all; now I forced myself to do so, lest I should lose my sight of *him*, his seal upon all that glory. As Seraphael had risen to depart, the applause, stifled and trembling, but not the less by heartfuls, rose for him. He turned his face a moment; the heavenly half-smile was there; then the summer sun, that falling downward in its piercing glare, glowed gorgeous against the stained windows, flung its burning bloom, its flushing gold, upon that countenance. We all saw it, we all felt it,—the seraph strength, the mortal beauty,—and that it was pale as the cheek of the quick and living changed to death. His mien was of no earthly triumph!"

While Felix grew great, the beautiful life in Berlin proceeded. Paul matured into worthy manhood; Rebecca, fulfilling her promise, becoming a woman of real intellectual power, was chosen as a wife by one of the most distinguished mathematicians of his time. The fame of Hensel grew, and under the influence of Fanny the Berlin home became the centre of a culture more than ever rich and brilliant. Hensel had a habit of sketching their guests, and in the

series is contained almost every interesting man and woman known to fame, who lived in or visited the Prussian capital of that time—painters and singers, actors and sculptors, poets, statesmen, scientists, and philosophers. “The musical parties, from small beginnings, became at last regular concerts, with choral and solo-singing, trios and quartets of the best Berlin musicians, and before an audience that filled all the rooms. Fanny took the greatest pleasure in rehearsing her splendidly schooled little choir, which she generally did on the Friday afternoons. On a beautiful summer morning, nothing prettier could be seen than the *Garten-saal*, opening on to the trees, filled with a crowd of gay, elegantly-dressed people, and Fanny at her piano, surrounded by her choir, performing some ancient or modern masterpiece. When Hensel had a picture nearly finished, the doors of the studio stood open, and a grave Christ might look down upon the throng, or Miriam, leading her own people, would symbolically express upon the canvas what was in living truth passing in the music-room.” “Last month,” wrote Fanny June, 1834, “I gave a delightful fête—‘Iphigenia in Tauris,’ sung by Madame Decker, Madame Bader, and Mantius. Any thing so perfect will not soon be heard again. Bader especially was exquisite, but each rivalled the other, and the sound of these three lovely voices together had such a powerful charm that I shall never forget it. Every thing went off beautifully.”

In this home the parents accomplished their days,—the mother so full of good sense and watchful

affection, the father broad-minded and religious. Always they bear in their hearts their children and grandchildren. "O Sebastian!" breaks out Abraham, during a visit to London, thinking of his little grandchild; "I thank God you are not the child four and a half years old which a few days ago was advertised in thousands of placards as missing. The thought of it never leaves me, and is interwoven as a black thread with my London life. The poor child has surely not been brought back, but was most probably stolen and thrown into the street, starved and naked, to be brought up by a gang of beggars and thieves. And all this because perhaps the parents lost sight of it for half a minute!"

And yet one does not have to go far back in the generations to find the intense Jewish fierceness, such as glared in John of Giscala, in Shylock, and in the elders of the Amsterdam synagogue, who poured out malediction upon Spinoza. The mother of Leah was an unrelenting Israelite, who denounced her own son, an apostate from the ancient faith to Christianity, with blasting curses. In the grandchildren, however, we find nothing but affections of the gentlest and the sweetest. Paul, the youngest, of whom little mention has been made, thoroughly unobtrusive, but a highly successful man of business, was distinguished for his charity, and was in no way less lovable than the more conspicuous Felix and Fanny. It is of these two only that we have the full record, and we must draw from it still more to make plain their loveliness of soul, and the peace and happiness of their lives. Upon the christening-day of her boy,

Fanny writes to her father: "I cannot allow such a joyful and beautiful day to come to an end, dear father, without writing to tell you how we have missed you. An event like this will make one's past life rise vividly before one, and my heart tells me I must again thank you, dear parents (for this letter is meant for mother also), at this moment, and I hope not for the last time, for guiding me to where I now stand, for my life, my education, my husband! And thank you for being so good—for the blessing of good parents rests on their children, and I feel so happy that I have nothing left to wish for but that such happiness might last. I truly know and feel how blessed I am, and this consciousness is, I think, the foundation-stone of happiness."

At another time Fanny writes from Rome, at the end of a long sojourn, during which she and her husband had given and received much joy, in the midst of a brilliant company, many of them great men, or about to become so. Fanny's music had been a constant source of delight: "The instrument had been moved into the large hall, the twilight was rapidly deepening, and a peculiar sensation stole over the whole company. For a long time I preluded as softly as possible, for I could not have played loud, and everybody talked in whispers, and started at the slightest noise. I played the adagios from the concerto in G major, and the sonata in C sharp minor, and the beginning of the grand sonata in F sharp minor—with Charlotte, Bousquet, and Gounod sitting close beside me. It was an hour I shall never forget. After dinner we went on to the

balcony, where it was lovely. The stars above, and the lights of the city below, the glowworms, and a long-trailing meteor which shot across the sky, the lighted windows of a church on a hill far away, and the delicious atmosphere in which every thing was bathed,—all combined to stir in us the deepest emotion. Afterwards we went to the end of the hall and sang the part-songs, which gave great satisfaction. I repeated, by general request, the Mozart fantasia to finish with, and the two capriccios, and then the part songs were asked for once more, and then midnight had arrived and our time was over. ‘They weep they know not why!’ was our last music in Rome.

“A glorious time has passed away! How can we be thankful enough for these two months of uninterrupted happiness! The purest joys the human heart can know have succeeded each other, and during all this time we have scarcely had one unpleasant quarter of an hour. The only drawback has been that the time would go so fast. Our last farewell from St. Pietro in Montorio was not easy work; but I retain in my mind an eternal, imperishable picture, which no lapse of time will affect. I thank Thee, O God!”

She describes her father as he lay in death: “So beautiful, unchanged, and calm was his face that we could remain near our loved one, not only without a sensation of fear, but felt truly elevated in looking at him. The whole expression was so calm, the forehead so pure and beautiful, the position of the hands so mild! It was the end of the righteous, a

beautiful, enviable end, and I pray to God for a similar death, and will strive through all my days to deserve it as he deserved it. It was death in its most peaceful, beautiful aspect."

That Felix could receive the homage of the great without compromise of his independence of character, appears in the following: "Prince Albert had asked me to go to him at two o'clock, so that I might try his organ before I left England. I found him alone; and as we were talking away the Queen came in, also alone, in simple morning dress. She said she was obliged to leave for Claremont in an hour, and then, suddenly interrupting herself, exclaimed: 'But, goodness! what a confusion!' for the wind had littered the whole room, and even the pedals of the organ, with leaves of music from a large portfolio that lay open. As she spoke she knelt down and began picking up the music; Prince Albert helped, and I, too, was not idle. Then Prince Albert proceeded to explain the stops to me, and she said that she would meanwhile put things straight.

"I begged that the Prince would first play me something, so that, as I said, I might boast about it in Germany; and he played a choral by heart, with the pedals, so charmingly and clearly and correctly, that it would have done credit to any professional; and the Queen, having finished her work, came and sat by him and listened, and looked pleased. Then it was my turn, and I began my chorus from 'St. Paul'—'How Lovely are the Messengers!' Before I had got to the end of the first verse they had both

joined in the chorus, and all the time Prince Albert managed the stops for me so cleverly; first a flute, at the *forte* the great organ, at the D major part the whole register; then he made a lovely diminuendo with the stops, and so on to the end of the piece, and all by heart, that I was really quite enchanted. The Queen asked me if I had written any new songs, and said she was very fond of singing my published ones. 'You should sing one to him,' said Prince Albert; and after a little begging she said she would try. * * * After some consultation with her husband, he said: 'She will sing you something of Gluck's.' While they were talking I had rummaged about amongst the music, and discovered my first set of songs. So, of course, I begged her rather to sing one of those than the Gluck, to which she very kindly consented; and which did she choose? '*Schöner und schöner schmückt sich*'—sang it quite charmingly, in strict time and tune, and with very good execution. * * * The last long G I have never heard better or purer or more natural from any amateur. Then I was obliged to confess that Fanny had written the song (which I found very hard, but pride must have a fall), and to beg her to sing one of my own also. If I would give her plenty of help she would gladly try, she said, and then she sang the Pilgerspruch, '*Lass dich nur*,' really quite faultlessly, and with charming feeling and expression. * * *

"After this Prince Albert sang the Aernde-Lied, '*Es ist ein Schnitter*,' and then he said I must play him something before I went, and gave as themes

the choral which he had played on the organ and the song he had just sung. * * * As if I were to keep nothing but the pleasantest, most charming recollection of it, I never improvised better. I was in the best mood for it, and played a long time, and enjoyed it myself so much that, besides the two themes, I brought in the songs that the Queen had sung, quite naturally; and it all went off so easily that I would gladly not have stopped. It was a delightful morning! If this long description makes Dirichlet set me down as a tuft-hunter, tell him that I vow and declare I am a greater radical than ever." •

The following letters show touchingly his manly piety and the depth and purity of his love as a son and a brother: "The wish which of all others every night recurred to my mind was that I might not survive this loss, because I so entirely clung, or rather still cling, to my father, that I do not know how I am to pass my life; for not only have I to deplore the loss of a father, but also that of my best and most perfect friend for the last few years; and my instructor in art and life. When in later years you tell your child of those whom you invited to his baptism,* do not omit my name, but say to him that one of them, too, on that day began his life afresh, though in another sense, with new purposes and wishes, and with new prayers to God."

After the death of Fanny, in the spring of 1847, which preceded his own by a few months only, Felix

* The letter was written in reply to one inviting him to a christening which was to take place on the day on which he heard of his father's death.

wrote thus to her husband and son : " If you ever want a faithful brother, who loves you with his whole heart, think of me. I am sure I shall be a better man than I have been, though not such a happy one. But what shall I say to you, my dear Sebastian? There is nothing to say or do but this one thing : pray to God that He may create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us, so that we may even in this world become more and more worthy of her who had the purest heart and spirit we ever knew or loved. God bless her, and point us out the way which none of us can see for ourselves ; and yet there must be one, for God himself has inflicted this blow upon us for the remainder of our lives, and may He soften the pain. Alas, my dear brother and friend ! God be with you and with Sebastian, and with us three, her brothers and sister ! "

These children and grandchildren of Moses Mendelssohn were as fortunate in their deaths as in their lives. Abraham and Leah, before the weaknesses of age had made themselves felt, sank painlessly away in the arms of their children. Felix, Fanny, and Rebecca, in like manner, without knowing long-continued suffering or any benumbing of the powers of spirit and body from advancing years, closed their eyes quickly and quietly upon the world. As one reads of their careers, it seems almost the ideal life. Where can be found more charming pictures of refinement, happiness, brilliant powers, achieving at once the best success ! Rare and beautiful as were their gifts, these are less interesting than their spiritual graces,—the unobtrusive piety, the sweet

domestic affections, the tender humanity, the large-minded superiority to prejudice, which constantly appear. The trace of human infirmity is plain enough in the household, as, for instance, in the irregularities of Dorothea. According to the universal lot of mortals, we may be sure that each man and woman of them had his and her share of shortcomings. But as one reads, the drawbacks make little show, and it is a natural aspiration, would that men in general were as fortunate and as good !





CHAPTER XXI.

OUR HEBREW CONTEMPORARIES.

WE have traced the Jew from his first appearance, in the most remote antiquity, until the present time. The pride and force with which he confronted the most powerful nations of the ancient world have been portrayed ; the unyielding spirit with which he defied the Roman, even while he was driven from his land to wander as an outcast ; the spiritual intensity with which he subdued his very conquerors to his ideas, even at the moment when he was himself crushed ; the gulf of woe through which he has passed ; the new glory which he is at length seizing upon now that the chain is broken, and his imperishable energy has once more free course. It is a people of astonishing vigor ; the wonderful character of whose achievements it is hardly possible to exaggerate.

In some parts of the world the idea seems to be gaining ground that we are all to be pushed to the wall by the all-conquering Israelite ; that the money power is falling into his hands, and political power is following ; that he is, in fact, seizing upon the best places in every direction ; that the time is at hand when the Jew, with all his haughty pride of race, is

to grasp the headship of the world ; that, holding himself apart more arrogantly than ever, he will suffer no contact between himself and those whom he has brought under, except where his scornful foot is pressed upon the Gentile neck.

Said Dr. Stöcker, not long since, a well-known preacher of Berlin, who is a leader in the anti-Jewish movement in Germany : " At the post-mortem examination of a body lately, there were present the district physician, the lawyer, the surgeon, and a fourth official, all of whom were Jews. None but the corpse was a German. Behold a picture of the present ! "

The best business men of Germany, it is declared, are Hebrews ; banking they almost monopolize ; the journals are largely in their hands ; they have seventy professors in the universities ; they have the most brilliant parliamentary leaders. Strong as the Germans are, a great party among them appears actually to feel that the one and one half per cent. of Hebrews in their population is likely to crowd on until Teutonic power and prestige, by their hands, are deftly and properly laid out and interred. The hate entertained against the Israelites by the rabble, and even by those higher in station, has uttered itself at the present day in the old mediæval cry, " Hep ! Hep ! " The days of proscription are scarcely passed, and men have even been tortured and murdered in times quite recent, under the old accusation of poisoning wells and crucifying children. This mingled fear and repugnance finds a half-humorous but forcible expression in certain stanzas by Franz Dingelstedt, a poet of Vienna, which may be thus translated :

Gone are the days of bitter tribulation ;
Changed are the times which now we see emerge.
The cunning Jew, amid our lamentation,
From our unskilful hands doth wrest the scourge.

He crowds the farmer hard with scheming knavish,
The trader from the mart he elbows well ;
And half with gold and half with mocking slavish,
Buys from the spirit of the age his spell.

Where'er you turn, the thrusting Jew will meet you,—
The chosen of the Lord in every view.
Lock them in Juden-gassen I entreat you,
Lest in some Christen-gasse they lock you !

Whether the apprehensions of the Germans are reasonable or not, we will not stop to inquire ; but what testimony is this to the astonishing power of the Jew, that one of the greatest of modern nations seems to shudder with the fear that this fraction of Jews in its population is about to reduce it to subjection !

While the heart of the Christian cannot be said to have thoroughly relented, can the heart of the Jew be said to have lost its scorn ? “ Be on your guard when you enter a synagogue,” it was once said to me. The Christian needs to take heed if he enters a temple in some parts of Europe, whether it be some ancient low-walled sanctuary, like those in little towns on the Rhine, or the superb structures that may be found in the great cities, where shrine and canopy are beautiful as frost-work,—with fringe of gold and lamp of silver,—the Oriental arches throwing back from their purple vaults the sound of the silver trumpets and the deep chant of the high-priest.

The Jew comes in his sanctuary to the most vivid sense of his race and faith ; even while he reveres the sacred tables of the Law, his eye can darken, and his lip spit forth contumely upon the unwelcome Nazarene.

I well remember also going into the shop of a Jew, in an ancient city, and during our bargaining, crossing his purpose in a way that aroused his anger. The flash in his dark eye was of the hereditary wrath bequeathed to him from many generations of persecuted fathers, called out by the son of the Christian who stood before him ; in the hiss with which his words came forth, I seemed to hear a serpent that had been gathering its poison for a thousand years.

Even those among the Hebrews who are leaders for intelligence, and whose minds have become broadened by contact with the Gentiles, like Moses Mendelssohn and Sir Moses Montefiore, cling tenaciously to the traditions and usages of their forefathers. If one studies the race where it has been shut off in a measure from contact with other men, many heirloom customs and prejudices from the dark old days come to light, sometimes picturesque, sometimes startling, sometimes, indeed, terrible. A strange interest attaches among them to the burial of the dead, and there is a curiously affectionate care of the sepulchres of their lost ones. As has been mentioned, the office of *lavadore*, the one who prepares the body for the grave, is one of high honor among them ; their cemeteries are tended and made beautiful, even when the descendants of the sleepers have utterly disappeared, by fellow-Hebrews, who

will not suffer an Israelite grave to go uncared for, even though it holds a stranger. Longfellow's stanzas upon the Jewish cemetery at Newport contain a sentiment most sweet and pensive :

How strange it seems ! these Hebrews in their graves,
Close by the street of this fair sea-port town,
Silent beside the never silent waves,
At rest in all this moving up and down !

The trees are white with dust, that o'er their sleep
Wave their broad curtains in the south wind's breath,
While underneath such leafy tents they keep
The long mysterious Exodus of Death.

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,
That pave with level flags their burial-place,
Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down
And broken by Moses at the mountain's base.

The very names recorded here are strange,
Of foreign accent and of different climes ;
Alvarez and Rivera interchange
With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

Closed are the portals of their synagogue ;
No psalms of David now the silence break ;
No rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

Gone are the living, but the dead remain,
And not neglected ; for a hand unseen,
Scattering its bounty like a summer rain,
Still keeps their graves and their remembrance green.

How came they here ? What burst of Christian hate,
What persecution, merciless and blind,
Drove o'er the sea, that desert desolate,
These Ishmaels and Hagers of mankind ?

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
Ghetto and Judenstrass in mirk and mire ;
Taught in the school of patience to endure
The life of anguish and the death of fire.

All their lives long, with the unleavened bread
And bitter herbs of exile and its fears,
The wasting famine of the heart they fed,
And slaked its thirst with Marah of their tears.

Anathema Maranatha ! was the cry
That rang from town to town, from street to street ;
At every gate the accursed Mordecai
Was mocked and jeered, and spurned by Christian feet.

Pride and humiliation, hand in hand,
Walked with them through the world where'er they went ;
Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,
And yet unshaken as the continent.

For in the background figures vague and vast
Of patriarchs and of prophets rose sublime,
And all the great traditions of the past,
They saw reflected in the coming time.

And thus forever with reverted look
The mystic volume of the world they read,
Spelling it backward like a Hebrew book,
Till life became a legend of the dead.

But ah ! what once has been shall be no more !
The groaning earth in travail and in pain,
Brings forth its nations, but does not restore,
And the dead nations never rise again.

In a book* which gives many a curious picture of the Jews of Poland, an account is contained of a burial-place, a story which may well follow the plaintive lines just transcribed. Until within a few

* "Die Juden von Barnow," by Emil Franzos.

years, it was the only soil the Hebrews were allowed to own, and it was cherished until the grass was green upon every mound; elders grew by every head-stone, with purple berries among their leaves, giving forth in spring a powerful perfume, while in autumn the heather glowed with a deep red. About stretched the level landscape, to where in the distance could be seen the faint hue of the distant Carpathian mountains. On four hundred head-stones was chiselled the same date. These marked the graves of the victims of a massacre. Two rival nobles had claimed a town, from both of whom the Jews had sought to buy protection. Both, however, turned upon them in wrath, slaying them for three days and nights. Other graves again had found their tenants, when a magnate of the land, because there was no other game in the neighborhood, hunted the Jews. The head-stones are all shaped alike, differing only in size, with no carved figures, for the prohibition of Moses must be obeyed. Stones which bear no name mark the graves of those held to have committed some great sin, and there are many nameless graves in this Podolian field. They are left uninscribed rather in mercy than in punishment; for at the last day, the angel of eternal life will call the sleepers, reading the names upon the stones, the good to inherit bliss, the wicked, to suffer. If the stone is without a name, the sleeper may be passed over.

As a visitor one day approached the burial-ground, he saw two old Israelites engaged in the ancient custom of "measuring the boundaries." Each car-

ried in his right hand a short, yellow stick; a continuous thread united the two, being wound upon each stick into a close, thick ball. First, the men stood still, holding the sticks near together, and singing in unison a strange traditional chant. Then one paused, standing fixed and holding his stick vertical, while the other, walking on slowly and gravely by the side of the inclosing hedge, singing meantime in high nasal tones, unwound the thread as he went, keeping it straight and tight. At about thirty paces distance, he in turn stood fixed and silent, while his companion, singing in his turn, advanced, winding up the thread as he did so, the ball on the one stick becoming larger, as that upon the other grew less. As the measurers stood together, the chant in unison once more took place, followed, as before by the single voice, as another thirty paces was accomplished. It is said the bounds are measured by some such ceremony, wherever Jews are to be found, but never in this peculiar way except in the province of Podolia, upon the anniversaries of the deaths of near relatives. The thread is used afterwards for some pious purpose, as to form the wick of candles used in sacrifice, or to sew a prayer mantle.

The visitor had observed a nameless head-stone in a hollow alone. Its shape indicated that it marked the resting-place of a woman; to the right and left were the unmarked graves of babes. What could be the fearful crime which had condemned the mother to a nameless grave in such isolation? At length, from one of the old measurers of the bounds,

he obtained the story. Leah Rendar had been marked, as a girl, among her companions for a wealth of shining, golden hair. She had been very beautiful, of a German rather than Jewish type, and her chief charm had been her sunny locks, of which she was very vain. They wrapped her like a veil, so that she was called "Leah with the long hair." It is prescribed among the Jews of Poland, that no married woman shall wear her own hair, which must be cut short, perhaps even shaved, before the wedding. A high head-dress of wool or silk must crown the head in its place. To neglect this rule is a terrible sin.

In due time came to Leah the day of betrothal, then of marriage. At the latter she appeared without the golden hair, and with the great head-dress. All went merrily, and for a year to come happiness attended bridegroom and bride. Leah's first child, however, came dead into the world. When a year or two more had rolled by, a second child came, but lived only six days, and the rabbi of the synagogue suspected that some law had been broken by the mother. At length, on the Day of Atonement, husband and wife spent the hours with the people in the crowded synagogue. The odor of the candles, and the close air, caused Leah to fall fainting from her prayer-stool. In the effort of the women to restore her, her head-dress became displaced, when lo! the iniquity was revealed: the golden locks fell as of old about her form. Her vanity had induced her to violate the law, and leave her hair uncut. Both husband and wife were straightway excommunicated. Neither they nor their belongings could be touched except in enmity. They were outcasts.

In course of time another son was born to Leah. Said the rabbi: "The parents are outcasts; the father is under the ban, the mother wears her own hair. The child is innocent, but if it remains with its parents, it must share their fate." When the child was six days old, masked men broke into the house, dragged the mother from her bed, and cut off her hair. She died two days after, her child following her, and the poor mother was placed apart from her fellows in the lonely dell. So she lies under her head-stone which is uninscribed, that the recording angel may, perhaps, at the great day of judgment, pass her by, and her soul, with its sin, not be cast forth into the outer darkness.

An ancient custom, not yet forgotten in some parts of Germany, is that daughters who apostatize, are counted as dead, mourned as such by their parents, and that graves even are prepared for them. The poet Meissner has described this usage in verses which have been translated as follows: *

The anthems for the dead are sung ;
The old Jew's garb in grief is rent ;
And yet no corpse is sunk to earth,
For she still lives whom they lament.
The grave awaits her,

From oldest days and earliest times,
The Jews such saddening custom have,
That she who leaves their Father's God,
They count as dead and dig her grave.
The grave awaits her.

* Translated by Henry Phillips.

In Venice city, bright and gay,
Upon the purple flood there lies,
In swift gondol, a soldier fair,
And on his breast a Jewess lies.
Her grave awaits her.

He kisses tresses, lips, and cheek ;
He calls her his own darling bride ;
She nestles in his golden hair ;
She gazes on her love with pride.
Her grave awaits her.

In noble halls, at banquets rare,
She strikes the zither's golden chords,
Till wearied deep by pleasure's sway,
Refreshing sleep its joy affords.
Her grave awaits her.

But once, as sped a dream of bliss,
When daydawn broke she was alone.
With traitorous flight beyond the seas,
Her faithless love for aye was gone !
Her grave awaits her.

She tears her silky curling locks ;
She wanders on the sea-beat shore ;
When lo, her father's words return !
" Be thou accursed forevermore !
Thy grave awaits thee."

A beggar-wench on Alpine road
Wanders toward home through night-wind wild.
Unwept, within a deep ravine,
Unblest, lies tombed her ill-starred child.
Her grave awaits her.

The ancestral graves mourn sad and lone ;
Their silent, solemn rest, who breaks ?

A shadow falls on church-yard walls,
The moonbeam shows a form that seeks
The grave that waits her.

She rolls the slab from off the grave,
With wearied limbs and failing breath.
In silent prayer she lays her form
Within the tomb, and welcomes death.
The grave had waited.

But dismissing these melancholy pictures, let us inquire for a moment what we need to fear from the Hebrews. Some one has defined the type of shrewdness to be: "A Jewish Yorkshireman of Scottish extraction with a Yankee education." Such a combination would indeed be likely to bring to pass a very sharp result. We are to notice that if the Jew is to be taken as the Alpha of shrewdness, the American is at the same time the Omega. The two ends balance each other, and I for one have too much faith in my compatriots to expect ever to hear it said that the American end of the tilting board has gone up. In the competitions of American life it is diamond cut diamond; it is hard to say whether Jew or Yankee will show most nicks as marks of the grinding power of the other. Take your real down-Easter that has been honed for a few generations on the New England granite. Can Abraham or Jacob or Moses show a finer edge? We may hope that in any competition upon this lowest plane the American will be able to hold his own. Would that we might be as sure that we shall match them in those higher spheres in which Hebrew genius, wherever the jesses

have been thrown off, has soared with such imperial sweep!

Do we like our Hebrew neighbors and rivals? * Says Felix Adler, the scholar and teacher of ancient Jewish blood, but who has cast off all narrow Judaism to stand upon a platform of the broadest: "The Jews have certain peculiarities of disposition; they have Asiatic blood in their veins. Among the high-bred members of the race the traces of their Oriental origin are revealed in noble qualities, in versatility of thought, brilliancy of imagination, flashing humor, in what the French call *esprit*; these, too, in powerful lyrical outpourings, in impassioned eloquence, in the power of experiencing and uttering profound emotions. The same tendencies among the uneducated and illiterate give rise to unlovely and unpleasant idiosyncrasies, a certain restlessness, loudness of manner, fondness of display, a lack of dignity, reserve, repose. And since one loud person attracts greater attention than twenty who are modest and refined, it has come about that the whole race is often condemned because of the follies of some of

*In "Imperfect Sympathies," Charles Lamb frankly writes: "I have, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They are a piece of stubborn antiquity compared with which Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the pyramids. But I should not care to be in habits of familiar intercourse with any of that nation. Centuries of injury, contempt, and hate on the one side,—of cloaked revenge, dissimulation, and hate on the other, between our and their fathers, must and ought to effect the blood of the children. I cannot believe it can run clear and kindly yet; or that a few fine words, such as candor, liberality, the light of the nineteenth century, can close up the breaches of so deadly a disunion. A Hebrew is no where congenial to me."

the coarsest and least representative of its members."

The characteristics which Felix Adler thus describes as belonging to a portion of his countrymen, have no doubt sometimes repelled. It is, however, great narrowness to allow our estimation of the race to be determined in this way. In the popular play, "Sam'l of Posen," the hearty young Jew, of blood quite unadulterated, just from the frontiers of Poland, where we are told the Jew is at his worst, is no more remarkable for his love of money and hard business push than he is for his good nature, his gratitude, and kindness of heart. The voice of the people declares it a portrait faithful to the life.

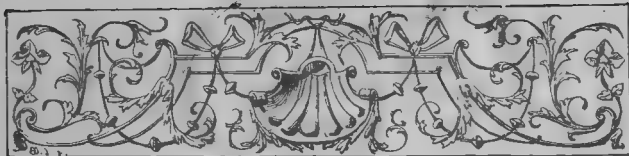
This Semitic flotsam and jetsam thrown upon the Aryan current, after that current had wrecked so cruelly ancient Israel—always upon it and in it, yet never of it,—soluble by no saturation, not to be pulverized or ground away by the heaviest smittings, unabsorbed, unoverwhelmed, though the current has been rolling for so many ages ever westward, until at length the West is becoming East, is it to subsist forever apart, or will it some time melt into the stream that bears it? Whatever Judaism may have lost through abjurations of its creed, there has so far always remained a compact nucleus firmly clinging to the old Judaic standards. From the immemorial rites and traditions, they say, there shall be abatement of neither jot nor tittle. Circumcision and Passover, Talmud and Torah,—be these to us as they were to our fathers. They are no more a proselyting body, it has been said, than the House of Lords; they are the aristocracy of the human

race, though for the time they may be pawnbrokers, or sell old clothes. "Intermarriage with the Gentile is a thing abhorrent. Let the chosen people hold itself aloof until a time shall come when Jehovah shall give to it the headship of the nations." Such a nucleus there is to-day. Meantime, however, there are Hebrews of a spirit quite different. Moses Mendelssohn looked not so much toward any headship for his race, as toward a brotherly coming together of men, a recognizing in the spirit of charity of the necessity of differences between creeds,—an era of tolerance and mutual forbearance.

When in the eye of the Hebrew there beams thus a gentle and conciliatory light, what can the Gentile better do than hail it with gladness and meet it with cordiality? The path into which Moses Mendelssohn struck has been followed by his disciples farther, sometimes, than he would have approved. His own children and grandchildren proceeded to lengths from which he, with all his noble breadth of soul, would have recoiled, holding as he did to various Israelite limitations. In laying his foundations he builded more wisely than he knew, for the superstructure was to be a beautiful and all-embracing charity. How hopeful is the influence proceeding from this gentle teacher! The world in these latter days has seen few men and women more richly adorned with gifts and graces than his descendants. As from a bed of repulsive refuse will sometimes spring blossoms of perfect loveliness, so out from the *askenazim*, that degraded German Judaism, with its foul *Juden-strassen*, from among the people despised even by those

of their own faith, have come those who in beneficent genius, in gentle virtues, in all forms of sweetness and light, present a most delightful picture. It is a very fair flowering of humanity. Our story has had many a page of horror; it has been pleasant at last to turn to things so tranquil and lovely. One cannot but wish that the lot of the Mendelssohns were the universal lot, and that the world in general deserved as thoroughly as they, to have so much happiness given them for a portion. Would that the children of Israel, following their new Moses, the son of Mendel, might all come out into such a Canaan of kindness, wisdom, and breadth of soul; and would that the Gentile world, leaving behind their thousand forms of cruel narrowness, might meet them through gaining a similar loveliness of spirit! Through all the ages no gulf has seemed so deep and wide as that which severed the Jew from the world which he would not have and which would not have him. Even to-day it seems almost utopian to imagine that the chasm can be filled. As, however, in the slow evolution of man his heart gradually refines and softens, it is not a vain hope that there will some time be such a coming together of those as yet unreconciled, each advancing from his shadows into a space made beautiful with the radiance of charity.





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